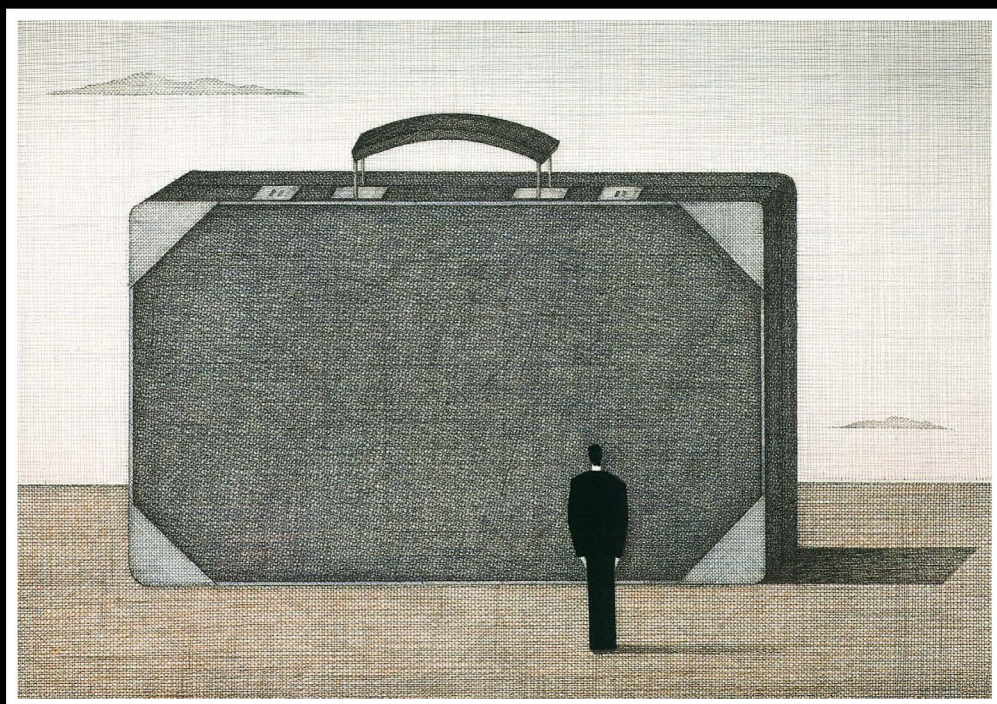


EDITORS PAWEŁ BRYŁA

TOMASZ DOMAŃSKI

# THE IMPACT OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME ON MOBILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY



WYDAWNICTWO  
UNIWERSYTETU  
ŁÓDZKIEGO

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ŁÓDŹ 2014

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## INTRODUCTION

For a variety of reasons, universities are increasingly seeking to develop internationalization strategies and programmes as a part of their evolving institutional missions (Tadaki and Tremewan 2013). Universities communicate their international programs to attract prospective students interested in studying abroad (Kincl et al. 2013). Internationalization of higher education is becoming an important topic for studies in educational research (Nikitina and Furuoka 2012).

Although it is possible to benefit from student experiential learning in global virtual teams (Taras et al. 2013), international student mobility has its strong merits. Participation in international student mobility for a period of studies abroad constitutes an important element of university education and has clear implications for professional careers of graduates. For instance, in Norway, those studying abroad are more satisfied with their educational institution, and they put more effort into their studies than non-mobile students (Wiers-Jenssen 2003) and higher job probabilities were also found among those who had parts of their education from abroad (Wiers-Jenssen and Try 2005). International student mobility has emerged as a key source of societal and educational transformations, as was confirmed by evidence from East Asia, with international competencies being increasingly valued by employees and employers alike (Oleksiyenko et al. 2013). Pyvis and Chapman (2007) distinguished two types of reasons for seeking an international education in Malaysia: valuing it as a passport for employment or making self-transformative investments. International education may be linked to social transformation currently occurring in China (Xiang and Shen 2009). There is a need for the development of entrepreneurial potentials within education systems (Mitrovic et al. 2013), which may be supported by international student mobility. International student mobility flows within the Erasmus programme are determined by such factors as: country size, cost of living, distance, educational background, university quality, the host country language and climate (Rodríguez González et al. 2011), but individual motivations of mobility participants also deserve a thorough exploration. A recent study of incoming student mobility in Turkey showed that private rationales are prominent for students coming from Western and economically developed countries, while economic



and academic rationales are more relevant for their colleagues from Eastern and economically developing countries (Kondakci 2011). As student satisfaction becomes increasingly important (Sadilek 2013), international student mobility may affect its level, although analysis of student mobility should not be confined to a framework that separates study abroad from the wider life-course aspirations of students (Findlay et al. 2012).

In the context of increasing internationalization of education, academic mobility appears as a potential source of qualified workers from host countries' perspective, either during their studies or through subsequent recruitment. Study abroad can be part of a deliberate immigration strategy from the perspective of students (Tremblay 2005). Mobile students, particularly those who graduated abroad, more often than nonmobile students search for and gain work experience abroad (Wiers-Jenssen 2008). The direction of international human capital flow can also be affected by people's psychocultural perception of overseas study, the international relations between host and source countries, the nation state's higher education policy, and social changes in both the domestic and the global contexts (Pan 2010). The mobility of international students represents an important emerging focus for human geographers interested in the dynamic intersections between education, migration and globalization (Collins 2012). A consequence of the dramatic rise in international student mobility is the trend for foreign students to remain in the country in which they had the study period abroad (Gribble 2008). The stock of foreign students is an important predictor of subsequent migration (Dreher and Poutvaara 2011). Studying abroad and the number of months spent studying abroad increase the probability of currently living abroad (Oosterbeek and Webbink 2011). Students (and their parents) see studying abroad as an investment in their cultural and social capital in preparation for a more lucrative 'international' career (King 2010). These students are often considered ideal migrants, possessing local qualifications along with a degree of acculturation, language skills and, in some cases, relevant local work experience (Gribble and Blackmore 2012). Expanding international education and economic globalisation have changed both the make-up of international labour migrants and the patterns of immigrant economic adaptation (Liu-Farrer 2011). In a recent study among 623 international students in New Zealand, it was found out that the determining factors for the choice of destination country upon completion of studies abroad were: initial return intention, family support, length of stay in New Zealand, work experience, and level and discipline of study (Soon 2012).

The new patterns and forms of migration seen among East European migrants in the West – in terms of circular and temporary free movement, informal labour market incorporation, cultures of migration, transnational networks – illustrate the emergence of a new migration system in Europe (Favell 2008). The main reason for emigration of Poles after the accession into the European Union was an economic one: lower wages in Poland than in the EU-15 member states

and a lack of jobs in Poland (Kundera 2009). A stronger propensity to migrate is observed among young and relatively well-educated Poles, who, at the same time, originate from economically backward areas characterized by limited employment opportunities (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008). The Polish recent emigration to other European Union member states is characterised by new mobility patterns (Black 2010). For instance, a study among Polish migrants in Ireland showed that, as ‘free movers’, Polish migrants are more mobile across national borders and within national labour markets. This affords them new opportunities beyond the employment experience. In particular, the younger and more educated of these migrants are part of a new generation of mobile Europeans for whom the move abroad is not only work-related but also involves lifestyle choices as part of a broader aspiration for self-development (Krings et al. 2013).

Temporary study in another European country has remained an exceptional and professionally highly rewarded experience for students from Central and Eastern European countries (Teichler and Janson 2007). The Erasmus programme enhances the employability of graduates by enabling them to participate in an international collaborative project without the need to extend their degree length (James 2013). A recent study based on data from 48 countries and regions concludes that countries aiming to attract talents from other countries should pay more attention to attract international students and encourage them to seek working opportunities in local employment markets after finishing studies (Wei 2013). In a survey among Erasmus students from the University of Oviedo, it was found that job prospects are an important motivating factor to engage in international student mobility, and the overall assessment of the planned stay is acceptable, good or excellent in most cases (Fombona et al. 2013). According to Bótas and Huisman (2013), Polish students’ participation in the Erasmus programme has a positive impact on their academic achievements, and cultural, social and linguistic capital.

This book aims to fill the existing gap in the literature of the subject by offering a comprehensive analysis of the impact of international student mobility within the Erasmus programme on subsequent mobility and employability. According to our knowledge, it is the first attempt to go beyond the analysis of immediate motivations, obstacles and consequences, and focus on long-term impacts instead. It was possible thanks to the adoption of innovative methodology, as we have developed a questionnaire addressed to former Erasmus students, which was mainly sent to those participants of the student exchange programme who had the benefit of hindsight. They had taken part in Erasmus usually 5 or 6 years before, which enabled us to study their subsequent international mobility decisions and professional career paths. Our survey was international in itself, as we elaborated and agreed on the same structure and content of the questionnaire, which we translated into the relevant languages from the commonly approved English version. This standardized approach ensured a high level of international comparability of data

and results presented in this book. This book includes the summaries of our case studies from Poland, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, we provide an overview of relevant statistics on international student mobility from secondary sources in the respective country case studies as well as a review of selected bibliography from each country. The first chapter provides some general information about the Erasmus programme and the design of our international research project, while in chapter 2 you may find an overview of the theoretical background. We devote most space to the presentation of our quantitative results from Poland, because the sample (consisting of over 2,000 completed questionnaires from alumni of 115 Polish higher education institutions) is national in scope and enables a series of in-depth analyses of the issues under study, including cross-sectional comparisons by sex, level of parents' education, current country of residence, and the type of education. We have included a chapter on the process of internationalization of education at the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the University of Lodz provided by its current Dean, as a model example of a reaction to opportunities and challenges stemming from the general trend towards internationalization of higher education. Finally, we have also conducted a series of interviews with selected former Erasmus students and experts in the field. We host a detailed account of their Erasmus experience from 3 (currently) doctoral students at the University of Lodz. This chapter is light in style, but rich in interesting insights into the phenomenon under study.

*Paweł Bryła*

# Chapter 1

## ERASMUS MOBILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY RESEARCH

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the European Union's Erasmus Programme celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. From a modest start in 1987, supporting just 3,224 students across the original 11 participant member states, the Programme now helps over 230,000 students per year to study abroad, and has a budget in excess of €450 Million. With the 2013 cohort, the total number of student participants passed the 3 Million mark, and a further 300,000 university staff have been supported. Over 4,000 institutions now hold the Erasmus University Charter across 32 countries. Together, these figures allow the European Commission to claim, with some justification, that Erasmus is the 'most successful student exchange programme in the world' (European Youth Portal, 2013).

Certainly, these achievements are noteworthy, especially in a rapidly changing world, but it is clearly not just its longevity or its scale which marks Erasmus out from other forms of student mobility or from other EU funded programmes in general. Nor do these factors in themselves guarantee the almost universal praise which it still appears to enjoy. Its success stems from a combination of factors. At one level, it has all the hallmarks of a good product recognisable to any student of marketing; a product simple to understand, easy to deliver, and with a large potential client base. But the Erasmus success also raises deeper questions about why the experience of studying abroad is deemed to be so important, and by whom. In doing so, it feeds into the theoretical and conceptual debates around social and cultural capital, around mobilities, competitiveness and globalisation. At the political level too, the idea of Erasmus has managed to steer clear (largely) of political controversy, achieving the Holy Grail of EU policy-making; an unequal action, overtly integrationist in origins but around which a consensus of opinion has developed that the Erasmus experience is good for the individual, good for society and good for Europe.

The Programme now offers a rich source of data for analysis, with a wealth of statistics being produced by the European Commission and the national agencies.

For the qualitative researcher too, the traditional leavers' survey has been augmented by an increasing collection of interviews and testimonials, prompted particularly by the anniversary, as well as a growing body of on-line sources, web pages, and social networks like the Brussels based Erasmus Student Network. Personal blogs proliferate too, as students readily publicise their personal experiences of living and studying abroad. Of course, how to use these data raises some important methodological issues in itself. How representative are personal testimonials? Do we have a reliable control group, and if not, how can we use the existing statistics to help us understand cause and effect? Are the differences between the figures for the member states so great that they prevent reliable comparisons, and simply reflect national circumstances and attitudes rather than amounting to any common European phenomenon? Moreover, despite the wealth of available data from the last 25 years, the long term impact of Erasmus is still largely underexplored and under-theorised. Although some longitudinal studies have been undertaken, the impact of the Erasmus experience upon individuals' attitudes and life choices, upon their job prospects and earning potential, the impact upon employers and organisations, and its contribution to the wider debates on European integration or to the concept of Europeanisation, remain deduced and asserted rather than proven or understood. The role of the Erasmus experience in shaping the expectations and actual mobility patterns of former participants has similarly been under-researched to date, and it was with the aim of addressing this gap that a small group of academics and researchers from across Europe came together to undertake the research whose findings are set out in the following chapters.

## 1.2. THE AIMS OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME

The Erasmus Programme, named after the Dutch Renaissance theologian and humanist Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, and established by the European Commission in 1987, brought together a number of existing student exchange activities under one umbrella focused upon encouraging greater cooperation between universities, and providing direct payments to students for periods of study abroad. The original objectives of the Programme set out in Article 2 of the Council Decision (1987) are as follows:

(i) to achieve a significant increase in the number of students from universities as defined in Article 1 (2) spending an integrated period of study in another Member State, in order that the Community may draw upon an adequate pool of manpower with first hand experience of economic and social aspects of other Member States, while ensuring equality of opportunity for male and female students as regards participation in such mobility;

(ii) to promote broad and intensive cooperation between universities in all Member States;

(iii) to harness the full intellectual potential of the universities in the Community by means of increased mobility of teaching staff, thereby improving the quality of the education and training provided by the universities with a view to securing the competitiveness of the Community in the world market;

(iv) to strengthen the interaction between citizens in different Member States with a view to consolidating the concept of a People's Europe;

(v) to ensure the development of a pool of graduates with direct experience of intra-Community cooperation, thereby creating the basis upon which intensified cooperation in the economic and social sectors can develop at Community level.

These are clear objectives, but the language used is interesting; highlighting the ideological underpinnings and assumptions of long-term benefits. The founding principles of cooperation and equality are obvious here, and perhaps to be expected, but the aim of normalising mobility within the higher education sector, and especially targeting young people to create a future 'pool of graduates' in whom such activity is commonplace, assumes that the Erasmus experience can be both behaviour forming and one which increases economic competitiveness. The notion that this improved competitiveness is defined at the Community level, competing against the rest of the world, would not be lost on scholars of self-identity, nor can we fail to see the significance of the aim of 'consolidating the concept of a People's Europe'. That such bold statements of intent could be expressed reflects, perhaps, a degree of confidence at the European level at that time; an integrationist hegemony, with the mobility of young people as its driving force.

By the time Erasmus was subsumed by the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme in 2007, the number of students supported had exceeded 150,000 per year. The new Lifelong Learning Programme consolidated the various education and training activities under one heading and Erasmus became one of the sub-programmes, along with its counterpart for schools (Comenius) and the Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig programmes for vocational and adult education. Its separate identity was maintained along with its focus upon developing mobility in the higher education sector. This growing strength of the Erasmus brand is evident in Erasmus+ (2014–2020), the new 16 billion euro catch-all programme for education, training, youth and sport, which has subsumed the previous programmes of Youth in Action, Erasmus and LLP. Divided into 3 principal pillars: education and formation, youth, and sport, the main objective of Erasmus+ is to improve employability of youth by enabling supplementary competences appreciated by employers, as well as improving their language skills and employment flexibility (European Commission, 2013).

Article 21 of the original text reinforced the commitment to encouraging further cooperation in higher education, and placed Erasmus at the heart of efforts to achieve 'a European Area of Higher Education'. The objectives included a target of 3 million participants in student mobility by 2012, but also set out aims

to increase ‘the degree of transparency and compatibility between higher education and advanced vocational education qualifications gained in Europe’ and ‘to improve the quality and to increase the volume of cooperation between higher education institutions and enterprises’. The themes of innovation and promoting higher education-industry links had by now become popular within discourse on higher education policy, and to this end, Erasmus funding was now able to be used to support industry placements abroad for students.

This ‘mobility for placements’ has grown to be a significant part of the current Erasmus Programme, with the European Commission (2012b: 54) report showing that outbound student mobility for placements amounted to 40,913, almost 18% of the total in 2010-11, and an increase of 15% from the previous year. With the latest cohorts, the total number of placements supported under the Erasmus Programme will have exceeded 250,000, and this goes some way to explaining the continued steep increases in participation, as total numbers generally include both types of mobility. In overall terms, in 2010-11 the greatest number of Erasmus students came from Spain (35,406), followed by Germans (31,333), and French (31,284). As the 2012 report acknowledges though, a truer picture of the propensity of, and attitudes towards, student mobility in participating countries is perhaps provided by a comparison based upon numbers in proportion to their total student population. Breaking down the figures between mobility for studies and for placements provides further interesting differences in totals and trends. The UK, Denmark and the Netherlands had the highest proportions of placement students, representing, in each case, over 30% of their total Erasmus outbound students, although, in terms of actual numbers, the UK with 4,256 placements in 2010–2011 came fourth behind, Spain (4756), Germany (5096) and France (5958) (European Commission 2012b: 54).

Although the ‘mobility for placements’ has ostensibly the same aims as the more common ‘mobility for studies’ activity, the potentially different motivations of participants and different impacts, and the reality of different national uptakes and mobility patterns, requires careful recognition in comparative analyses. On the other hand, the direct contact with employers in this part of the Erasmus Programme provides the opportunity for new avenues of research, not just to explore the motivations and impacts upon students of the Erasmus experience, but also upon performance of employing organisations, management attitudes, and recruitment practices.

The Commission’s figures for incoming students also highlight interesting differences between countries. Spain continued to be the most popular destination for studies in 2010-11 with 30,580 incoming students, a 16% share of the total number of Erasmus students this year. The second most popular destination was France with 23,173 students (12.2 %) and then Germany with 19,119 (10%). According to the Commission’s 2012 report, students learnt most often in the English language (28,390), followed by Spanish (23,478) and French (20,616) (p. 40).

Of course this issue is linked to subject choice, and to some extent level of study, but the fact that the number of students studying in English exceeds the number of UK incoming Erasmus students reminds us that an increasing number of courses outside of the UK are being taught in English. The reverse is true for Spain and Spanish, but the figures do not appear to cancel each other out, and suggest a more complex picture of supply and demand in relation to language of study. Its impact upon mobility patterns of different nationalities or types of students, and its origins in the different educational and cultural backgrounds of students and whole student populations is clearly a key question for more in-depth research.

As the research described in the following chapters highlights, data collected by the national agencies on the subjects being studied by Erasmus students and categorised under broad headings can be misleading, especially but not only in relation to those studying language degrees. However, in broad terms we can see that Erasmus students are more likely to be studying subjects within the Social Sciences, Business and Law, followed closely by the Humanities and Arts. The numbers studying maths, sciences and computing courses is markedly less, as is the number for engineering and manufacturing. As with other raw figures, these differences may simply reflect the disparities in the total student populations rather than representing reluctance on the part of certain groups to study or work abroad. Again, the high numbers of language students, especially in the case of the UK, skew these results, and the figures for placement students, although largely mirroring those for studies, do show a significant increase in the number of students on veterinary and agricultural courses, possibly due to a growth in university-employer consortia in this field.

In terms of levels of study, the Erasmus Programme provides support to students from Bachelor to Doctoral level, but almost 70% of students participating in Erasmus mobility for studies in 2010–11 were Bachelor students. Almost 30% were studying at Master's level, whilst those on Doctoral programmes were a little under 1%, with an even smaller percentage (0.6%) registered in education institutions offering short-cycle higher vocational education courses. Figures for placements are broadly similar, with the exception of this last category which amounts to 19% (European Commission, 2012b: 54).

These differences prompt obvious questions about the motivations of students and the key determinants of host country choice. The findings from the case studies described in detail in the following chapters shed new light on these issues and provide some useful insights into the correlations of host country choice, subjects studied and motivations. The case studies also underline the importance of ensuring relevant comparisons when analysing data across Europe especially in relation to the levels and categorisation of subjects. Together, these raise some important policy implications for the future development of Erasmus.

Although the European Commission allocates funding to the national agencies to support outbound mobility, the actual number of outbound students depends



upon a multitude of factors, including the duration of periods of mobility, the level of monthly grants awarded, and of course, the demand from students as well as the level of encouragement from universities. Whilst these factors are managed and monitored, the ability to control incoming numbers is much more limited, and relies upon efforts at university level to balance numbers through stricter controls and closer management.

The 2012 report shows that in some cases, whether by management or luck, the imbalances are negligible (Spain, Slovenia the Netherlands for example), and in others, the imbalance can be seen to be favourable, at least in purely financial terms for individual institutions, as they export more than they import. Other member states, like Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Ireland and the UK have high proportions of incoming students. The UK, for example, hosted almost twice as many students (24,474) as there were outgoing (12,833). In the UK, this imbalance does not just apply to Erasmus. A report produced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (2010) states that in 2010, 33,000 UK students were studying abroad, while 370,000 foreign students were studying in the UK, although only around one third of these were from other EU countries. In percentage terms, 15% of the UK HE student population were foreign students in 2010, while only 1.6% of the UK student population were studying abroad. The financial implications of this disparity in non-EU students are, of course, very different, but the Erasmus figures for the UK and perhaps for other countries too, should be viewed within the wider context.

Similarly, the fact that high proportions of outbound students are found in many of the new Member States, including Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Turkey (which is a candidate to the European Union), clearly reflects specific local factors and drivers of mobility, and this level of outward mobility, albeit temporary in the first instance, raises questions about the impact upon universities, as well as local and national economies. In the Turkish context, research has shown that Turkish Erasmus students see Turkey as a part of the EU, they think Turkey's accession to the EU would favour the mutual comprehension of European and Muslim values and a majority of the students approve the accession of Turkey to the European Union (Demirkol 2013).

These imbalances are not recent phenomena and have been much discussed at EU and member state level. Given that host institutions are unable under Erasmus rules to charge incoming students, the relatively high number of incoming students would appear to present an unsustainable model, financially, for some countries and institutions. That these imbalances are tolerated, at least at member state level, suggests a commitment to the cause of student mobility beyond what rational choice theory might predict; a participation for the greater good, or at the very least a reluctance to rock the boat in this area of EU policy. A tightening of agreements between universities to ensure that the costs of teaching incoming students does not exceed the savings presented by outbound students, a 'one-in, one-out policy', is certainly more prevalent today, but nevertheless, imbalances clearly continue.

How deep this commitment is at university level will, no doubt, be further tested in coming years as commercialisation and internationalisation, and competition and cooperation battle for dominance in the strategic plans of universities.

### 1.3. MOBILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY RESEARCH FOR GENERATION ERASMUS (MERGE)

In 2010, a group of academics and researchers from around Europe, specialising in aspects of mobilities, Europeanisation and internationalisation, came together to explore the role of Erasmus in the subsequent mobility patterns, expectations and aspirations of its participants. A successful application was submitted to the Lifelong Learning Programme to enable a transnational research project to be developed based around case studies in key participating universities. The following chapters describe in detail the nature of this research and the findings from these case studies, and also discuss the methodological and theoretical approaches adopted and the further research questions raised by their analyses.

#### **Project objectives**

Recent changes in global demographic behaviour, and increased rights of mobility across European borders, has created a greater freedom for people to live, study and work in many countries across Europe. These legal rights have been augmented by many European initiatives and funding programmes which have further focused on enhancing the mobility of its citizens across Europe, from town twinning to the Marie Curie Actions for research fellowships. Even more recently, and as part of the European Higher Education Area, a target has been set for 20% of all students by 2020 to have experienced studying or training abroad upon graduation, with the Lisbon European Council of 2000 calling upon the higher education sector to play a major role. However, this target has not been adopted strategically by most countries<sup>1</sup>, and in the opinion of the Commission, very few countries ‘appear to have mounted specific information campaigns to encourage students of the benefits of studying abroad’ and ‘a major push is required in policy making and implementation of measures if the targets and the ‘aspirations for an open and inclusive space for mobility’ are to be achieved (EACEA 2010: 42). Whilst removing barriers to student mobility has been an overarching goal of European Commission education programmes since its inception, the Erasmus programme in particular has now become central to the achievement of these ambitious priorities, especially as the financial crisis bites into personal finances and public funding at the national level.

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<sup>1</sup> Some countries have greater targets: the Netherlands (25%), and Austria and Germany have targets of 50% of students studying at least a semester abroad by 2020.

The research in this project set out to critically analyse the impact of the Erasmus experience upon the personal aspirations, career pathways and actual mobility patterns of former participants (Fig. 1.1). In doing so, it was anticipated that the research would help identify the key benefits of mobility as well as continuing barriers, leading to the development of new strategies and practices. The research would focus mainly on the current experiences of former students to help update and increase understanding of information at national and regional level on Erasmus students and specifically their transnational mobility and employability patterns. The research plan, therefore, was to use 4 case studies to provide evidence of the employment patterns and mobility of former Erasmus students from 4 different institutions.

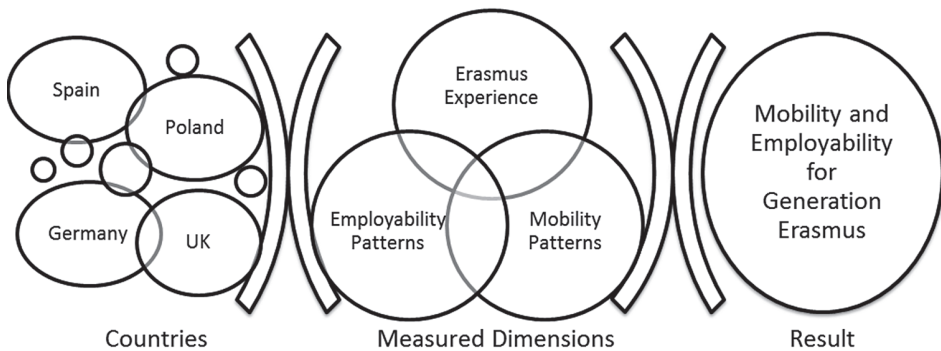


Figure 1.1. MERGE project research framework  
Source: own elaboration

The project sought also to explore the potential for using virtual tools, such as social networking websites (building on the model of the existing Erasmus Facebook page) to both gather qualitative information on the experiences of mobile students and examine its potential as a model for engagement with former students. There has clearly been a rapid increase in the use of virtual learning environments and social networking websites by educational institutions for the enhancement of student mobility and learning in general, but methods of data collection from social networking is less well developed. It is recognised that traditional methods of data collection may be too expensive and time-consuming to be used to track all former Erasmus students, and part of the challenge the project set itself was to explore the potential for using on-line social networking to capture reliable data and measure impact in a way which would be empirically sound and cost effective.

Whilst substantial, general data relating to the overall numbers of students is available through the European Commission's own reports, and more specific

national data available from the national agencies, this is largely limited to quantitative information. This information, though comprehensive, frequently lacks critical analysis, and little opportunity is provided for wider discussions to explain the figures and trends, or to place them in a theoretical context. More specifically, there is a paucity of good qualitative data, especially comparative, and although students are required to complete an end of experience survey which asks about future intentions of mobility, the actual longer term impact upon job prospects and mobility of Erasmus students is less well documented and understood. Put simply, the research undertaken by this partnership sought to ascertain whether Erasmus has an impact, and if so, how that can be measured, and to understand what it is about the experience that produces these impacts.

### Research Partnership

The project brought together a number of transnational partners who could contribute in different ways to the challenges of analysing mobility within the Erasmus programme and help shape future thinking and policy making on a national and European level (figure 1.2). The 6 partners provided a set of complementary skills and experience which, in addition to collecting valuable new comparative data and insights, could also help bring Erasmus research to a wider audience.

## Strategic Transnational Partnership

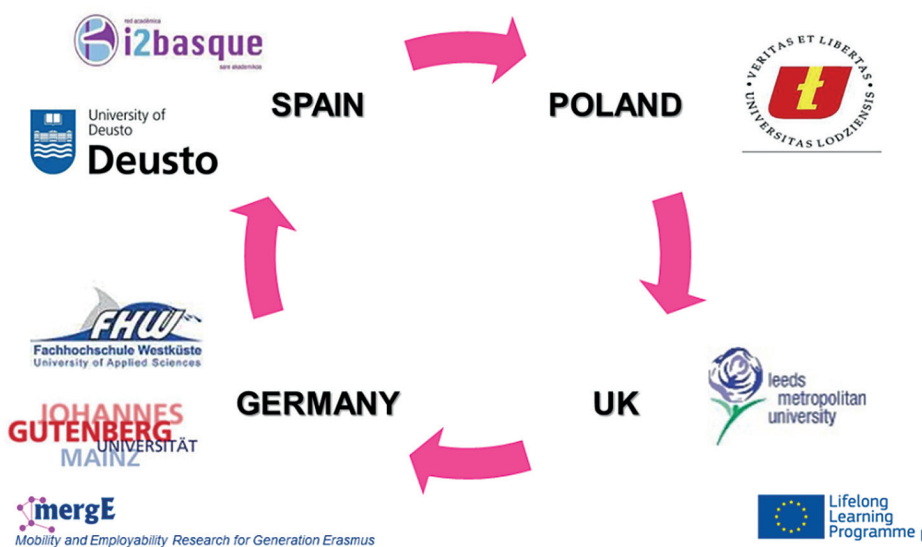


Figure 1.2. Strategic transnational partnership within the MERGE project

Source: own elaboration

The University of Lodz is a major player in the Erasmus programme with around 150 incoming students and 550 outgoing students per year. Capturing the motivations, experiences and longer term employment patterns of these students provides the project with important information on mobility and, Poland being a relatively new EU member state since 2004, helps in the identification of differences in attitudes and expectations. Internationalisation is a key strategic priority for Lodz and its students, and the team has extensive experience in international marketing. The University of Lodz has co-managed the research activity, and through its strong relationship with the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education is able to ensure that research findings can be used to inform future policy and implementation in Poland and beyond.

The University of Deusto has a high percentage of Erasmus students, along with other Spanish institutions, and its position in the relatively affluent Basque country, with lower unemployment rates and high concentrations of high-tech industries, provides a vital contrast to other regions, helping to highlight different motivations and mobility patterns amongst its students. As well as co-ordinating the project, the research team at Deusto provides specific research expertise in skills development in higher education, helping the project to analyse the Erasmus experience from a skills and knowledge acquisition perspective.

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz in Germany has around 230 incoming Erasmus students per year in a large range of subject areas. The University provides a significant data set for the research, as well as examples of good practice which can be used and shared to inform future development. Through the work of this University, the project also benefits from research expertise in the internationalisation of higher education, and can take advantage of significant opportunities for dissemination of research findings.

Leeds Metropolitan University in the UK is a large modern University with research expertise in education and mobility studies. As the UK context has been significantly different to many other European countries, having a UK perspective enabled research into the reasons why there is relatively low uptake of outgoing Erasmus mobility from the UK in contrast to the much higher levels of incoming Erasmus mobility.

I2BASQUE is a research institute in Donostia, Spain, specialising in electronic communications, multimedia and content management. Their role in the project has been the development of on-line social networking models to support students and promote the advantages of Erasmus. This part of the project sought to explore the potential of using social networking to capture evidence and collect qualitative data in a cost effective and scientifically acceptable way.

West Coast University of Applied Sciences, Germany. Through the contribution of this University, the project benefits from experience in research planning and formative evaluation, as well as an international perspective, especially in re-

lation to developments in East Asia. As a smaller institution which focuses upon applied sciences and international management, the University complements the other partners and ensures wider dissemination of results.

The high number of incoming students and low number of outgoing students commonly experienced by UK institutions is well documented, and provides an important contrast to the other partners. The experiences of universities in other member states is very different, and it is these differences which provide the vital comparative data from a cross-section of EU students which is needed to understand the barriers faced by different people in different locations, with perhaps different aspirations and motivations. This partnership provides a representative sample of the broad Erasmus experience and enables a comparative analysis of the impact of Erasmus.

As well as providing a breadth of experience in the Erasmus programme, the research partner institutions also add specific research expertise to embed the project activity within various theoretical frameworks and interdisciplinary approaches, thereby ensuring greater opportunities for dissemination and further study beyond the lifetime of the project.

#### 1.4. ERASMUS IN A EUROPEAN MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION CONTEXT

Although there is clear evidence of the importance of the Erasmus programme in enhancing mobility of people across European borders whilst students, the actual effects of the Erasmus programme on the future life choices and opportunities of such students remains unclear. Some studies assume that young mobile people tend to be mobile in the long term, but in reality, the EU and the relevant agencies in the member states are struggling to understand, predict and manage the flows of a wide range of groups, even when they are legal, transparent and recordable. Data collection on Erasmus and wider international student migration (ISM) is, therefore, a common problem across the EU and has become a priority for the EU and the Bologna Process. As the Commission's *Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010* report notes, 'even among countries that gather information on all main forms of mobility, very little information can be captured about the reality of 'free movers' – those who leave a country and enrol in a higher education programme in another country without taking part in any organised mobility programme. Yet this phenomenon appears from European level statistical information to be growing significantly' (EACEA 2010).

One key problem for the authorities has been the national criteria for data collection on migration which normally considers migrants as those who spend a minimum of twelve months in a foreign country. Student mobility therefore,

at least short-term ‘credit mobility’, has been divorced from wider policies and debates on migration, migrant employability and cultural change, but the longer term mobility propensities of Erasmus students would put them firmly in the category of migrant workers and drag Erasmus into the debates about migration. The EACEA report comments that, ‘Many countries that have developed policy to stimulate mobility in the higher education sector have also implemented policy to control and limit immigration – but few mention any tension or even the relationship between these policy areas. Indeed, despite the close relationship of mobility and immigration policy, only six countries (Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, the Netherlands and Portugal) mention attention to immigration legislation to create a supportive legal environment favouring mobility.’ (p. 42).

In the UK, the Government has made clear its intention to introduce measures to reduce net migration to the UK from, in their words, ‘hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands’, and has singled out the student visa regime as one area which requires further consideration. In the introduction to the Home Office report on *The Student Immigration System* (2010), the Home Secretary has said that they ‘expect the student route to make its contribution to reducing net migration’ and that ‘we want to make clear that the student route is a temporary one, and on completion of their studies, students will be expected to return to their countries of origin’ (p. 6). This approach follows the previous government’s introduction, in 2009, of the Points-Based System and new, tighter procedures for issuing student visas. At the same time however, the Government has acknowledged the importance of attracting the world’s best students, and the contribution international students make to the higher education sector and to the wider economy in general.

A report conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in February 2011, however, has questioned the extent to which the ‘student route’ actually contributes to net migration, and raises concerns that the proposed measures to tackle perceived abuses in the system risk damaging legitimate recruitment, and have a negative impact upon the economy. The report concludes that: ‘The government’s proposal to make student migration more temporary and short-term seem to be based on weak evidence. Relatively few international students stay in the UK in the long term, and there is little evidence to suggest that those who do have a negative impact on the labour market or the wider economy.’ (Mulley and Sachrajda 2011: 24).

Of course, on the surface at least, this debate relates only to student immigration from outside of the European Economic Area, and not to EU students, but logically this is only because the Government is unable to restrict EU student migration under its EU Treaty obligations (European Parliament and Council Directive 2004/38/EC of 29 April 2004). Notwithstanding this, the arguments about the contribution the ‘student route’ might make to net migration, and the debate about the benefits that such migration can bring to local economies and local employers, would appear to be equally relevant.

The conceptual approaches and theoretical dividing lines of neo-functionalism, new inter-governmentalism and multi-level governance in European Union Studies, provide an important sub-plot to any research on EU activity. The Erasmus Programme is no exception to this. Indeed, as noted by Brown (2011), the process of policy-making and implementation of EU funded activity can be seen through both rationalist and constructivist lenses. We can see, for example, that whilst some of the more integrationist language of the original Erasmus objectives has been removed, the aims and anticipated long-term impacts of greater student mobility and transparency of qualifications in Europe's universities through Erasmus, the EHEA and the Bologna Process remain in tune with the ideals of a pan-European higher education sector and of a European identity, based on shared values and experiences. How and why those member states which are more ambivalent to further EU integration support these inexorable cogs remains a key point of discussion and debate amongst academics and politicians. In this context, does the Erasmus model of 'decentralised action' within a centralised framework represent a blue-print for future programme management across the EU? The contribution, therefore, of Erasmus to European integration, to ideas on policy making in the EU and Multi-Level Governance, and to the concepts of Europeanisation and European identity, are all pertinent questions.

#### 1.5. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF ERASMUS MOBILITY

Whilst, as we have seen, the European Commissions and the national managing agencies collect and publish a whole range of data on Erasmus students, information on the personal circumstances of students is less detailed. Erasmus claims to actively support the participation of 'students with special needs' by offering a supplementary grant, but in 2010-11, only 255 students with special needs received this. Of course, this low number may be due to a number of factors, and may simply reflect the numbers of students in this category in the broader population. Nevertheless, the figures and the lack of data are obvious points for concern, and suggest a need for greater investigation, not least into the additional barriers faced by students with disabilities.

Similarly, the absence of data in the 2012 Erasmus report on the socio-economic backgrounds of participants prevents researchers from exploring the role Erasmus plays in raising the aspirations and providing opportunities for, what are often described as, under-represented groups. Clearly, differences in average living standards between countries, and difficulties in categorisation and nomenclature, all make this a complex area, especially for reliable comparison. Nonetheless, equality of access to higher education is an increasing concern in many of the member states, and given the Commission's wider and cross-cutting



commitments to ensuring equality of opportunities within their activities and practices, it would seem entirely appropriate to understand the performance of Erasmus in this area. If Erasmus does lead to tangible or even perceived benefits for its participants, then it is surely important that these benefits are made available to all. Indeed the dual goal of promoting economic growth and social equality was made explicit by José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, in his introduction to the Europe 2020 growth strategy for the EU to become a ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive economy’ with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

However, as the EACEA (2010) report on the impact of the Bologna Process illustrates, only 31 of the 46 Bologna countries reported that they monitor the participation of underrepresented groups. The report notes ‘this group of countries can be subdivided into those that systematically and routinely gather data related to underrepresented groups (22 countries) and those whose data come from more occasional sources of information – such as survey data (9 countries). Taking this into account, the European Higher Education Area currently appears to be fairly evenly split between those that have the necessary information at their disposal to develop appropriate measures addressing social dimension challenges and those who, for whatever reason, lack this basic information’ (EACEA, 2010: 31). The report further comments with some irony that, ‘It is interesting to note that, although countries most commonly perceive problems of participation related to low socio-economic status, the costs of higher education are rarely explicitly mentioned as a potential reason for underrepresentation’ (EACEA, 2010: 30).

Certainly, data from the individual national agencies suggest that although most universities are active in the Erasmus programme, many have very low numbers of students participating each year, and one obvious question must be whether any differences in the make-up of the student cohorts of these universities militates against greater involvement in Erasmus. In the UK for example, there appears a clear link between the type of university and propensity to be outwardly mobile, with the Russell Group of research intensive universities having proportionately a much greater number of Erasmus participants (Grove, 2012).

The 2010 Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) report *International student mobility literature review* on student mobility acknowledges that financial constraints are a major obstacle to outward student mobility, and that the students’ socio-economic background plays a key role with mobile students being ‘disproportionately white, female, middle-class and academic high-achievers’ (HEFCE, 2010). The high number of female participants is certainly an achievement for the Erasmus Programme, and adds a further level of complexity to questions of motivation, but in the case of the UK at least, can be explained largely by the proportionately high number of participants from modern language courses.

## 1.6. CONCLUSIONS: TOMORROW'S ERASMUS

Erasmus now provides financial support to enable more than 230,000 students each year to experience a period of study or work placement abroad. It also supports university staff teaching and training, and it funds cooperation projects between higher education institutions across Europe. As we have seen, it has become a major pillar of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme, and of the Commission's efforts to create a European Higher Education Area with greater transparency and transferability of qualifications. It is seen as a key component of Europe's efforts to tackle youth unemployment, and features in the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs and its initiative 'Youth on the Move'.

The Commission's website boldly claims that 'Student mobility contributes to individuals' personal development and thus supports the broader development of Europe's economies and societies. Learning abroad equips individuals with a wide range of competencies and skills that are increasingly valued by employers – from foreign languages to adaptability and greater intercultural awareness. In these ways, mobility boosts job prospects and encourages labour market mobility later in life' (European Commission, 2013). Of course, Erasmus is not the only form of student mobility and we need to be mindful that whole degree mobility, often to countries outside of the EU, may have many of the same motivations and purported benefits and impacts as the shorter Erasmus experience. Equally, the longer duration and greater distances from home might produce different or clearer correlations. Nevertheless, for short-term credit mobility, Europe is still the main destination for European students, and the bulk of this is facilitated by Erasmus.

Arguably, the Erasmus programme remains one the EU's great success stories, popular, understood and democratic. Its participants are its own best ambassadors, going on to work and live all over Europe and the world, sometimes in positions of power and influence. It appears to strike the right balance between the personal and collective benefit, appealing to both individualistic and societal predispositions; funded at the European level, but coordinated by managing agencies in the member states. It works on an individual basis, but the beneficiaries themselves have created a group, an identity shaped around a shared experience, and all this in the absence of homogeneity of time and place. The concept of the 'Erasmus Generation' captures this commonality. Yet, the very essence of this experience remains difficult to distil or to articulate. More importantly, at a time of heightened sensitivity around migration, the mobility of predominantly young, educated and ambitious undergraduates (and postgraduates) is widely accepted as a force for good, an aid to crosscultural understanding, foreign language acquisition, new skills and confidence. Erasmus remains largely untarnished by national self-interest or diluted by administrative interference.

One theme which stands clear is that of confidence; be it in language, in study, in personal autonomy. Whilst this might be an intangible outcome, we should not ignore its importance; after all, it is often seen as the bedrock of economic growth, of investment in research, of scientific advances and in the ability of societies to tackle new challenges. The exact benefits, however, remain difficult to measure, with cause and effect muddled and the lack of adequate control groups, or indeed access to large databases represents a frustrating challenge for researchers. Nevertheless, this should not deter us from trying to find out what the impact of Erasmus is, or how its essential components can be improved or bottled and embedded in other types of learning environments. Separating out the experience from the individual is problematic and raises numerous questions. Are these students more likely to be mobile anyway, even without the benefit of Erasmus? Do they have better language skills than their counterparts? Are they more confident and ambitious? Are they more tolerant, do they have greater cross-cultural awareness, are they more predisposed to benefitting from the experience, and what about their personality, their self-identity? Of course, these difficulties are faced by much of social research and are not insurmountable. Undertaking longitudinal studies of the highly mobile does, however, have its own challenges, and in the absence of tracking devices, innovative and cost-effective ways of data collection and interpretation should be explored.

In a modest way, this EU funded project, makes a contribution to a better understanding of these issues and of the benefits and difficulties of cross-European comparisons. Perhaps more importantly, it is hoped that it will help others researching student mobility and be of interest more widely to those interested in EU policy, in employment and curriculum matters, and for those looking at mobility and migration in the modern world. The launch of the new Erasmus+ Programme clearly demonstrates a continuing commitment amongst policy-makers at the European and member state levels to the ideals of Erasmus and a continuing belief in the benefits of student mobility. The new targets are ambitious, but they reflect both a renewed confidence in Europe that this success story has further to run, and that demand is likely to continue to increase, despite or perhaps even because of the economic uncertainty and stiffer competition in the jobs market. The outlook for Erasmus then appears assured, at least for the foreseeable future, and its survival and growth provides policy-makers and the academic community with continued opportunities for research. The challenge for the next 25 years is perhaps to better understand the impact of Erasmus; impact not just upon the careers and life experiences of its beneficiaries, or upon subsequent employers, but also upon social as well as geographical mobility.

## Chapter 2

### A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN STUDENT MOBILITIES

This chapter aims to shed light on theoretical approaches to student mobility in migration and mobility studies. In migration and mobility studies' literature about student mobility, there is a dichotomy: the one between student mobility and student exchange mobility. In the case of ERASMUS mobility, one rather talks of an exchange and network program – student exchange mobility. Even though the duration aspect might seem the only difference between these two forms of mobility, it can be quite substantial as it affects all dimensions of these mobility forms.

In the first subchapter of this chapter some of these possible dimensions are explained. Furthermore, it is possible to distinguish between organized student mobility and spontaneous student mobility (Van Mol 2012a: 1). While organized student exchange mobility, with its flagship – the Erasmus programme, is better known in Europe it should be clear that there are other, more individual, forms of student mobility. Furthermore, it is important to notice that this individual “short-term mobility within Europe has grown as well substantially and it remained until today at least as frequent as mobility supported by ERASMUS” (Rivza & Teichler 2007: 464). So whereas it is possible to rely upon basic assumptions propagated in scholarly literature about student mobility, one always needs to distinguish and find out whether these theories also fit student exchange or network programs.

As student exchange programs are a more recent phenomenon than forms of degree mobility, it seems that it also took scholars some time to address it. King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003: 230) point out that “the standard academic literature on migration pays virtually no attention to students as migrants: an ironic situation given that most migration scholars encounter students on a daily basis”. In an article by Koser and Salt (1998: 286), student mobility and the internationalization of higher education are still described as an “emerging issue [...] although the literature on this seems negligible”. The era of this underestimation of student

mobility has come to an end due to the fact that there is a fair number of articles and research published onto student mobility. Still though, it is hard to find articles which try to theoretically frame student exchange mobility. Before addressing various possibilities to model student exchange mobility it is important to address the various dimensions and aspects of student mobility.

## 2.1. DIMENSIONS AND ASPECTS OF STUDENT MOBILITIES

Historically, migration and mobility studies have always been interdisciplinary with a broad range of different analyzes and perspectives on the fields of study. In order to show the different approaches that exist, it seemed necessary to portray the various dimensions and aspects of student mobility. Generally, eight key dimensions of student mobility can be identified:

- 1) spatial movements/demographics,
- 2) economic consequences (labour market),
- 3) educational,
- 4) political,
- 5) psychological,
- 6) sociological: constructivist dimension of identity,
- 7) network dimension,
- 8) virtual dimension.

Firstly, it is possible to address mobility from a classic population geography perspective and to address the *demographic dimensions of spatial movements* (cf. Hillmann 2008). Secondly, it is also possible to focus on the *economic consequences* of student mobility e.g. this focus might be on the accumulation of human capital through mobility or a discussion about how exchange students strengthen and might catalyze the formation of a ‘knowledge-based society’ (cf. Ritzen 2011). As economic aspects can easily be found in many dimensions of mobility, this aspect cannot be restricted and it is hard to exclude this aspect in many analyses. Related to these debates are the consequences of student mobility for the labor market, or to what extent student mobility has an impact on a student’s employability (cf. Parey and Waldinger 2008). Thirdly, there are scholars of higher education who analyze *the educational effects of studying abroad* and how the individuals benefit from the mobility experience (cf. Byram 2008). Fourthly, student mobility also has a *political dimension* as every decision to study abroad, and to prefer a new higher education system in itself, can be interpreted as a political statement. Also, student in- and outflows are often guided by political aims and directives. Fifthly, mobility possesses a *psychological component* (cf. Krzaklewska 2008), as scholars can analyze decision-making processes in student mobility or when they investigate the effects that studying abroad has on individuals or groups. Sixthly, there are also a number of *sociological dimensions* to student

mobility. For example, in the case of student mobility within Europe, scholars also identify sociological dimensions – the possible formation of a European identity (cf. Van Mol 2012a: 1). Consequently, it is possible to connect spatial movements with concepts of identity. The seventh dimension to student mobility would be the aspect of *network formation through student mobility*. As students move within Europe, new networks between academic institutions, students themselves, or private partners develop and can be analyzed (Larsen, Urry and Axhausen 2010). A possible eighth dimension is *virtual mobility*. Most student mobility scholars do not really address this form of mobility and rather deal with physical mobility forms. As the Internet enables students to connect to other people and students and to access foreign academic literature and study resources, it is possible to analyze these mobility components (King 2012: 143).

Furthermore, it is essential to know that mobility can be subdivided into vertical, horizontal and lateral mobility. Whereas lateral mobilities are forms of spatial mobility, vertical mobility is a change in individual or group status or hierarchy. Horizontal mobility is the movement of individuals or groups who stay in the same socioeconomic position; e.g. this could be a change in occupancy. According to Rivza and Teichler (2007: 458) “mobility is perceived as a most suitable way of getting access to study provisions academically superior to those at home” or as a rare opportunity to specialize in a field, and consequently “the term ‘vertical mobility’ might be appropriate” (2007: 458). On the other hand ‘horizontal mobility’ is usually “between countries and institutions of Higher Education of more or less the same level of economic advancement academic quality” (Rivza and Teichler 2007: 458) with the intent to broaden the students’ horizons.

Forms of *horizontal mobility* (doing some courses in a different country in the scope of the programme in the home institution) are:

- a) *temporary mobility*, e.g. Erasmus mobility (Rivza & Teichler 2007: 463);
- b) *short-term mobility* – “all types of learning mobility, as long as it is not for degree purpose” (Maunimo Project 2013): could be Erasmus mobility but can also be a language course, traineeship or an internship;
- c) *exchange mobility* – reciprocity plays a big role: ideally, for one student going abroad, one student enters the sending country;

Forms of *vertical mobility* would be, for example:

- a) *programme mobility* – “when a mobile student enrol[[]s for a complete course” (Maunimo Project 2013);
- b) *degree mobility* – “mobility for degree purpose, even if only a part of the programme is studied abroad” (Maunimo Project 2013); or also the study abroad “for a whole study programme” (Rivza & Teichler 2007: 473);
- c) *diploma mobility* – following a whole programme in a different country (Hannam 2012: 10; cf. Rivza & Teichler 2007: 458).

Then there is also the term *intercycle mobility*, which refers to the form of mobility when a student changes to a different institution after receiving his or her

first degree (e.g. in-between Bachelor – and Master-studies (Hellmann: 24.30). It seems that there is some confusion about a number of these terms.

These terms are not used consistently (for example the definition of degree mobility from Rivza & Teichler (2007: 473) contradicts the Maunimo project's definition) and some terms can be used synonymously. Often the use of these terms clarifies what perspective the author of the statement has, for example terms such as exchange mobility or programme mobility illustrate more of an “institutional perspective than a student perspective” (Hellmann: 25.34) to the issue (Hellmann: 22.27; 23.46–24.15).

While analyzing student mobility, it should be clear that all these perspectives on student mobility can be valid and that it is possible to combine these perspectives. Nevertheless, it seems more important to distinguish and to clarify on which level one addresses student mobility. Again, this differentiation cannot make an analysis true or false, but it provides specific insights on the respective facets of student mobility. The possibilities of analyzing the effect of student mobility range from the individual, local, regional, institutional, national to the international level.

## 2.2. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF ERASMUS STUDENT EXCHANGE MOBILITY

While student mobility in other regions of the world is often characterized by spontaneous forms of mobility, the prevalent form of student mobility in Europe is organized mobility, mostly due to the Erasmus Programme. Furthermore, compared with other forms of mobility, Erasmus student mobility has the relative uniqueness of being a supranationally funded mobility program which allows students to study abroad for a relatively short period of time (Brooks and Waters 2011: 69–70, Rivza & Teichler 2007: 463–464).

Murphy-Lejeune points out that one of the most interesting aspects in student exchange programs is the aspect of institutional control, and criticizes that European exchange students are winners on the student side, because they are the “elite groomed by the EU, tiny in numbers, but over-researched with the best support systems” (2008: 21–22). One might not agree with this statement but the aspect of institutional control of a program like ERASMUS is undeniable and might be questioned. The DAAD Erasmus expert, Christiane Biehl, states that Erasmus has built a framework for international student exchange, for example by the creation of international offices in Europe (2012: 8.50–9.00), creating its own infrastructure at higher education institutions (Hellmann: 41.30–42.00). At most universities, the international offices had not existed before the Erasmus Programme, but became necessary as student exchange became more popular. Therefore, it is essential to keep in mind that Erasmus mobility is a mobility form which would not be

possible without its institutional framework. King remarks that “migration itself becomes a desirable act rather than an economic means to an end: a consumption good rather than a strategy” (2002: 95), hence he clearly characterizes how migration is used as a ‘good’ in order to promote the idea of a unified Europe as one of the essential strengths of the EU.

This unified Europe is supposed to be strengthened by the help of the Erasmus programme which serves “as a ‘catalyst’ for the formation of a European identity necessary for the legitimation of European institutions and for the overall project of European integration” (King 2003: 172–173 quoted in Brooks and Waters 2011: 73). According to the European Commission, the free movement of European citizens leads them to have a higher appreciation of “the benefits of EU citizenship and endorse European unification more vigorously” (Brooks and Waters 2011: 74). Further, there is also the assumption that “the opportunity to settle permanently in another EU member state is likely to strengthen feelings of European Union citizenship” (Brooks and Waters 2011: 74). Biehl argues that Erasmus can help young students to establish the awareness of sharing a common European history and of living on the same continent, which creates a feeling of togetherness (12.58). Biehl states that the Erasmus Programme does not create identities but rather sensitivities (16.02). According to Biehl, somebody who has spent a certain amount of time living abroad has a heightened awareness in terms of diversity and intercultural skills when coming back to his or her native country – in some cases the period abroad might also emphasize stereotypes but in general this should not be the case and international experience should help to develop a higher level of reflection (23.30–24.00).

Regarding the duration of study periods abroad, Bologna expert Hellmann elaborates that often positive stereotypes about a country will be destroyed or deconstructed in the opening stage of a student mobility experience and are not replaced immediately (56.20). Hellmann adds that one should not expect gains in statesmanship or a European-identity (if so, this identity has been there beforehand) from short study periods abroad such as Erasmus, but one can expect gains in language skills and experience (57.50–58.40). According to Hellmann, the ‘European dimension’ of the Erasmus Programme is mostly “rhetorical sugarcoating” to appropriate funding from EU policy makers in Brussels for the Erasmus Programme. Hellmann states, it was rather a lucky coincidence that the Erasmus Programme developed with EU-country states and some other European countries that can be attributed to European history. He states that there also could have been an international agreement between different parties which were located in spatially dispersed countries all around the globe (Hellmann: 1.12.03). Nevertheless, due to political emphasis on the EU and financial reasons, other ideas might not have been as realistic; “as spaces are of cultural nature – not geographical nature” (Hellmann: 1.13.24). This alternative of a multilateral education agreement could have become a reality and would have been similar to Erasmus – establishing



a new supranational space (Hellmann: 1.12.48). The fact that both Erasmus experts, Hellmann and Biehl see the possible European dimension of the Erasmus Programme rather pessimistically might be surprising when authors such as King and Ruiz (2003) or Van Mol (2011) portray the effects of Erasmus mobility on a possible European identity more positively.

Clearly, the motivations as well as the results of a study-period abroad might vary – students from some countries might seek better education elsewhere via Erasmus, others may go to a country in order to follow personal wishes, that are not career-wise decisions (Brooks and Waters 2011: 85). In a union which is still as diverse as Europe, theoretical assumptions about the motivations and the impact of Erasmus mobility can hardly be representative, consequently it is not surprising that Brooks and Waters (2011: 84–85) come up with a broad variety of scholarly opinions about this topic. It seems typical of current migration discourses that it appears hard to frame student mobility as well as to explore its boundaries. There is also the question: Who is ‘the typical Erasmus student’ and from what background does he or she emerge? First of all, it is important to note that most Erasmus students are female, about 60 percent of the students are female (Brooks and Waters 2011: 85). In addition, it should be noted that the question of Erasmus students’ social status is a topic for discussion. There are scholars who state that Erasmus mobility only amplifies “the growing cleavage between ‘locals’ and ‘cosmopolitans’” (Recchi 2006 qtd. in Brooks and Waters 2011: 87) as the programme in the end only wants to create a European elite that shape EU-policy making and provides “leaders of the future”, as was originally intended with Erasmus (Brooks and Waters 2011: 73). While Brooks and Waters are suggesting that “there is now fairly clear evidence ... that those who move as part of organized programmes such as the Erasmus scheme are typically from families with both experience of [Higher Education (HE)] and average or higher than average incomes” (2011: 82), they also state that apart from the global elites in intra-European migration there are also the ‘social spiralists’ who utilize the freedom of movement “to compensate for a relative lack of cultural and social capital within their home nation” (2011: 87). These ‘social spiralists’ can also be Erasmus students, who see student mobility as a “shortcut to capital accumulation – be it economic or cultural capital, or a mix of the two” (Recchi 2006 qtd. in Brooks and Waters 2011: 83). Altogether there are still a lot of uncertainties about student mobilities within Europe. Brooks and Waters end on the note that “we know little about the impact of the variation in financial support for students on mobility patterns” and they state that there are “disparities in the geography of such migration – with students tending to show preferences for studying in wealthier, northern European countries rather than their poorer, southern counterparts, and for countries which teach in widely-spoken European languages” (2011: 92). While this last statement might be true for degree-mobile students, it can be contested when examining Erasmus mobility. Statistics show that Erasmus students like to go

to southern European countries such as Spain, France and Italy, while at least the UK tries to distance itself from Erasmus mobility. In the UK, degree mobile students are being preferred to Erasmus students because they pay study tuitions and hence stronger contribute to the UK's economy and education system; consequently the decreasing number of Erasmus students in the UK is "not a sign of decreased 'attractiveness' of the UK for the ERASMUS students, but rather a direct consequence of UK's policy to maintain a more limited involvement in the programme" (Teichler et al. 2011: 89).

Van Mol (2012b) identifies three ways in which general student mobility is contextualized and explained in the scholarly canon, namely to view it "(a) as a part of highly skilled migration (e.g. Mahroum 2000; Tremblay 2002); (b) as a product of globalization (Altbach & Teichler 2001); and (c) as a part of youth mobility cultures and consumption geographies (Findlay et al. 2006)". It has to be questioned whether this differentiation (cf. Findlay et al. 2006: 293) does make sense because the mobility of the highly skilled as well as 'youth mobility cultures' or rather a kind of lifestyle mobility could be just as well described as facets of globalization. Student exchange mobility has developed a new characteristic, that it increasingly emphasizes leisure time instead of labor market necessities and highlights the freedom of choice of the individual and a 'fun' or 'lifestyle' component (King 2002: 95). Also Kenway and Fahey state that "the cosmopolitan euro student traveller [...] [is] one of the 'winners' of globalization, who is emancipated from the constraints of space as a result of the resources at his/her disposal and who is bound by few territorial responsibilities" (quoted in Brooks and Waters 2011: 83). This perception of student exchange mobility as form of leisure travel slightly conflicts with the view that some students might amass 'mobility capital' while studying abroad; for example in order to "secure a much-prized international position" (Brooks and Waters 2011: 84).

Regarding Erasmus mobility as a subset of highly skilled migration opens up questions of whether brain drain, brain gain or brain circulation can result from the Erasmus Programme. While the UK might be the only European nation which can claim to have a brain gain (Rivza & Teichler 2007: 463–464) in terms of mobile students, it is interesting to analyze the extent of brain circulation, catalyzed by the Erasmus Programme. Regarding brain circulation as a possible result of Erasmus mobility, Hellmann can imagine three country-specific cases within Europe when higher education institutions consider signing an Erasmus agreement.

- Firstly, there is the "naïve position" of the German or French higher education institution that "does not have that much to lose" (Hellmann: 34.17).
- Secondly, there is the case of a UK institution whose dean knows that there is a higher demand of foreign students who want to study at a British higher education institution than British students wanting to go abroad; resulting in a negative trade balance, especially as study tuitions are forfeited for Erasmus students (Hellmann: 34.35)

- Thirdly, there is the case of economically less powerful countries whose institutions might fear a brain drain (Hellmann: 38.01) resulting out of the Erasmus Programme, but also see the opportunity to internationalize their higher education institutions and increase the attractiveness of their institutions (Hellmann: 35.44). As a corollary, these institutions will try to frame the agreement in ways that make sure that the students sent abroad will return – as much as this is possible (Hellmann: 38.19).

According to these statements, all cases can be facilitated by the Erasmus Programme. Some countries might fear that the Erasmus stay might motivate their students to migrate to a different country after their stay abroad, resulting in a brain drain. Some countries like the UK, and to a lesser degree Germany or France, might experience a brain gain due to incoming students, and in some cases students from country A will return to their native countries after a stay in country B.

Trying to summarize these theoretical findings about Erasmus student exchange mobility, it can be stated that Erasmus mobility seems to be a mobility form characterized by a high degree of institutionality and embeddedness into a framework which was constructed by European policy makers. To expect the development of a whole generation of young Europeans as a result of Erasmus mobility, like the European Commission would like to advertise, is too much to expect. Erasmus mobility can only help in sensitizing young Europeans to diversity and togetherness in Europe. In addition, it seems that Erasmus students come from a broader variety of social backgrounds and that the majority of them are female. Nevertheless, brain gain, brain drain as well as brain circulation can be results of Erasmus mobility, thus resulting in a number of effects that Erasmus mobility can have on sending and receiving countries.

### 2.3. STUDENT MOBILITY MODELS

As mentioned before, models that try to portray the different kinds of student mobility are scarce in the literature of the subject. Nevertheless, a few scholars have already tried to model student exchange mobilities. Their models are presented in this subchapter. For this research, an interpretation of student exchange mobility as a subordinated form of student mobility seemed fitting and it is relied upon assumptions of general student mobility.

Krzaklewska (2008: 89–90) developed a model for Erasmus student motivations and differentiates between the four different main categories of academic, linguistic (which she emphasized as specifically important for most students (2008: 94)), cultural and personal reasons. Trying to embed the mobile student into the framework of migration theories, Krzaklewska (2008: 84) points out that the migration decision “is not caused by external factors such as fear or exter-

nal danger, but is a result of the rational calculation of profits and losses connected to both material and symbolic benefits”. She specifically emphasizes, that “the notion of novelty, new stimulus, otherness or change: students wanted to meet new people, live in a foreign country, and see a different educational system” was the pivotal decision factor for the student (Krzaklewska 2008: 90). Including a number of existing theories and surveys into her model, Krzaklewska (2008: 93–94) splits up the motivations to study abroad into an experimental dimension and a career dimension. The experimental dimension is subdivided into cultural and personal motivations, the career dimension is subdivided into career and academic motivations (Krzaklewska 2008: 94). Krzaklewska summarizes that those categories “mirror the situation of students: on the one hand students have to experiment and grow as a person (and have fun), on the other they have to compete on the global market with a set of competences and knowledge (and become serious employees)” (2008: 94). This two-sidedness (a combination of labor market competition and personal experiences) characterize important components of the nature of student mobility.

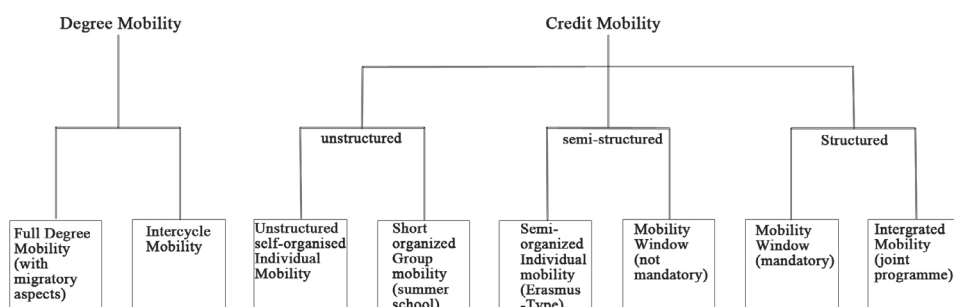


Figure 2.1. Jochen Hellmann’s student mobility model  
Source: Hellmann 2011

Somebody who created a model for student mobility, but has not published this model in any other form than a presentation is Jochen Hellmann from the Université franco-allemande (located in Saarbrücken) who is a member of the Bologna Experts of the German Academic Exchange Service. Hellmann’s model is a general model of student mobility, which includes forms of student exchange mobility (Fig. 2.1). Hellmann developed the model in order to give an overview over existing forms of student mobility, and to shed light upon inconsistencies in the use of various terms and concepts regarding student mobility (Hellmann: 2.59–3.53). Hellmann’s model, in which he generally differentiates between degree and credit mobility, splits up these forms of mobility into eight specific modes of mobility. The aspect that best characterizes credit mobility is the fact that students move from point A to point B and then return to A in order to receive

their degrees (Hellmann: 7.44–7.48). This form of mobility can be differentiated in unstructured, semi-structured and structured forms of mobility.

Unstructured individual forms of mobility are probably the most elitist forms of mobility as they often require the financial means to realize these self-organized forms of student mobility. Hellmann denotes this form of mobility as a form that used to be the dominant form of mobility in his time as a student (in the 1980s when student mobility was not as common as it is today (Hellmann 15.17) before programs such as Erasmus simplified student mobility (Hellmann 9.59–10.11)). Hellmann calls entirely self-organized student mobility a form of mobility which is in decline (15.10) and emphasizes that the intercultural learning effect is not very high with this form of mobility as there is no framework and support for the student (12.03). This form of mobility is individually organized, the student informs himself where he wants to study, applies at the university and takes a holiday semester at his home institution or leaves the home institution at least for a while (Hellmann: 14.33–15). Often, this form of mobility resulted from an “Interrail love-affair” (Hellmann: 16.04) in which cases an international couple wanted to study at the same university, at least for a while. Hellmann adds that this development has turned around and often students first take part in a semi-structured form of mobility, get into a new relationship, and sometimes change the form of credit mobility into degree mobility as the students try to stay in the respective ‘study-abroad’ institutions or cities (16.55–17.21). Therefore, it is important to state that there is permeability from credit to degree mobility (17.31), but it is hard to measure the amount of this “Brain Drain” (Hellmann: 32.26). This permeability can be an issue for economically weaker countries and might lead to permanent migration as students might find the situation in their host countries more preferable (Hellmann: 33.00–33.49). In addition, especially after the Bologna accords, short organized group mobility forms have become more popular, for example summer schools. As some Bachelor and Master students find themselves unable to study one or more semesters abroad due to a lack of time, summer schools seem to be good alternatives for some students (Wacker 2013).

In the case of structured student mobility, with a mandatory mobility window, the students knew from the beginning of their studies that they would have to study abroad in a certain semester (Hellmann: 19.05). Often, universities prefer the form of optional mobility windows to mandatory mobility windows, as the institutions do not have to account for providing a specific number of study abroad places (20.34). Hellmann states that in this case, the students are able to choose from a list of universities, whereas in the case of integrated mobility with a fixed curriculum the students know when they will go to which city (19.17–19.34).

Van Mol (2012b) compiled a summary of factors that have an impact on student mobility and arranged them in a model portraying the conceptual framework of Erasmus student mobility. In his model, Van Mol tries to display the factors of the socio-cultural context as well as the economic context that shape an in-

dividual's motivation to study or not to study abroad. The model also includes a cost-benefit calculation of the pros and cons to study abroad on the one hand, and a template of the EU framework and university institutional level that have an impact on the mobility decision. Then, there is the European student mobility itself which can lead to both: further mobility and the development of a European or cosmopolitan identity. Van Mol (2012b) relies on a neoclassic push-pull model with the list of pros and cons. Language acquisition, personal enrichment and career perspective are reasons, according to Van Mol (2012b), why students participate in the Erasmus programme. Costs, Linguistic insecurity, boy-/girlfriend, risk prolonging degree, and immobility culture (cf. Findlay et al. 2006) are obstacles to Erasmus student mobility (Van Mol 2012b).

#### 2.4. PRACTICES OF REGULATORY REGIONALISM IN THE EU

For the theoretical framework of Erasmus Student Mobilities, the Regulatory Regionalism approach, which was developed by Kanishka Jayasuriya, can also provide help in trying to understand how the ERASMUS Programme and the Bologna process operate and finally affect mobility and policy-making within Europe. This subchapter explains how Regulatory Regionalism and the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) seek to address and realize these goals. Therefore this approach is well suited to answer the secondary research question how European policy makers utilize the Erasmus programme to reshape Europe. Regulatory Regionalism is not a migration theory but rather an approach which helps to explain supranational modes of policy making, in this case within the EU. A short summary of the Regulatory Regionalism paradigm states that there are new spaces of governance, labeled regulatory regionalism, which “are not above the state; rather, they are located in regional spaces of the state, which overlap with national, political and policy-making regimes” (Jayasuriya 2010: 7).

The term ‘Regulatory Regionalism’ consists of the two concepts of regionalism and the process of regulation. Regulation refers to the idea that “modes of calculation and governing emerge, and how they come to be institutionalized, mediated and modified” (Jessop 2004 quoted in Robertson 2010: 24). Regarding higher education, we are specifically talking about “emerging global regulatory standards setting the stage for global competition over regulatory standards, particularly between the US and the EU” (Robertson 2010: 1). These regulatory standards in higher education have the capacity to define a power-struggle of competing supranational education systems. In this context, the term ‘regionalism’ has to be understood in its political meaning of supranational regulatory powers that surpass national and local policy-making while still having an impact on these levels (Robertson 2010: 24). With the combination of these two terms, Jayasuriya emphasizes the importance to see regional political governance not as an inde-

pendent addition to national policy-making and prefers to analyze the “co-constitutive relation between scales” (2008: 21 quoted in Robertson 2010: 25). Hence the authors suggest analyzing the interaction and dualism of processes of regionalization on multiple levels of governance. Robertson also states that Regulatory Regionalism seeks to overcome “a predominant view that regionalism is a process driven from the outside rather than also from within” (2010: 24).

Nevertheless, it should be clear that the effects of the Regulatory Regionalism might not be “confined to those domestic economies within the emerging region” but can have an extra-territorial dimension (Robertson 2010: 25). Brooks and Waters do not call this phenomenon Regulatory Regionalism but also “suggest that there are complex articulations between global influences and the priorities of particular nations and regions” (2011: 18). The spatial concept (Jayasuriya and Robertson 2010: 1) “that authority and political rule increasingly spill out of national territorial containers” while globalization progresses lead to a “reconstitution of the scales on which governance takes place”. Because this approach “challenges a range of assumptions with regard to the ‘national’ scope of authority, rule, and citizenship” it seems fit to address forms of mobility. As old spatial concepts have restricted the development of the field of migration studies for quite a while, this way of perceiving transnational movements and political, economic and further dimensions provides a better framework for analyzing migration and mobility. Clearly, it is only a tool in order to come to a better understanding of overlapping political, spatial and economic processes; nevertheless, it is a start to understand the increasing amount of parallel processes in times of globalization. From the perspective of regulatory regionalism, migratory patterns, such as student mobility can only be interpreted in the framework of its underlying agendas. Therefore, European student mobility needs to be analyzed in the policy contexts of ‘Europeanization’ and the global internationalization of higher education.

Jayasuriya explains that the regulatory framework of the Bologna process “enables different national systems of Higher Education to advance ‘mobility’ within the EU and helps to create a more knowledge-intensive economy” (2010: 8). The two components of market creation and mobility are essential interdependent goals of the Bologna process which policymakers aim to realize with the use of regulatory regionalism. Jayasuriya shows the connections of Regulatory Regionalism and mobility as he states: “ideas of mobility, central to the broader political projects of socialized neoliberalism, are also evident in the normative driving force of the Bologna process, and are similar to the social inclusion agenda of the EU, namely a desire to enhance the economic independence of individuals by equipping them with assets to compete in the global economy” (2010: 18). A regulatory process like the Bologna process is “not just a process of re-territorialisation but the creation of new spaces of governance that are layered onto, but not necessarily co-extensive with, existing territorial divisions” (Jayasuriya 2010: 10). Within the European Union, an example of Regulatory Regionalism

would be the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). The OMC is a mechanism that enables the European Commission to “establish policy coordination in areas under the jurisdiction of the national governments, or where jurisdiction is shared with the European Union” (Jayasuriya 2010: 9). The terms of internationalization or regionalization do not capture the essence of the OMC as it establishes “a new scalar regime that governs the relationship between the regional, national and sub-national levels” (Jayasuriya 2010: 9). Various actors from the private and the public sector are brought together in order to define new forms of political governance. Essential is not only the fact that public and private sector are both involved, but also the relationship of these two sectors in newly developing forms of governance. The involvement of the two sectors legitimizes the creation of new regulatory regimes within a state (Jayasuriya 2010: 8).

As Robertson (2010: 26) analyzes, there were two main concerns in European-level initiatives such as the creation of the ERASMUS mobility programme in 1987; on the one hand, the creation of a single European market was intended and, on the other hand, European policy makers wanted to raise a generation of European-minded citizens. Until the Maastricht Treaty was signed, European higher education policy had only been used “as a mechanism for the creation of the region of Europe and the development of its elites” (Brooks and Waters 2011: 34). With the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the EC acknowledged the EU’s role in European education policy, but only with the ‘Lisbon Strategy’ in 2000 were the EU’s educational and economic aims for the decade 2000-2010 loudly uttered as “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (European Parliament 2000). As Europe’s and the United States’ share of goods’ production were in decline they both shared a “common interest in expanding the global services economy – including the Higher Education as a market, as an engine for innovation, and a key sector in developing new forms of intellectual property” (Robertson 2010: 27).

As a result of the Lisbon strategy, the European Commission established a European Research and Innovation Area (ERIA) in January 2000 in order to support a European knowledge-based economy. Alongside the Lisbon agenda for higher education, the Bologna process (signed in 1999) played an integral role in European nations synchronizing and adjusting their higher education to a new common framework, consequently it was sought to emulate the US higher education system (Robertson 2010: 27). The various goals of the Bologna process were that within the EHEA, staff and student mobility was to be enhanced by the alignment of national quality assurance, compatible degree structures, the adoption of a credit transfer system and a common way of describing qualifications to be outlined in a personal ‘diploma supplement’ [...] enabling Bologna to act as a vehicle for raising the attractiveness of Europe as an education market worldwide (Zgaga 2006 quoted in Robertson 2010: 28).



The combination of quality assurance and a common qualification framework as key components of a unified higher education area was supposed to promote mobility and to raise the attractiveness of the EU for international students (Brooks and Waters 2011: 35). Nonetheless, it is important to note that the Bologna Process is a voluntary agreement which takes place outside of the EU's governance framework while still promoting many EU interests (for example the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)) (Robertson 2010: 28). Jayasuriya lists three components which are collective goals in both Bologna and Lisbon agendas: "(a) producing more competitive individuals and societies; (b) enabling greater mobility of staff and students essential for the creation of a knowledge-based economy; and (c) placing emphasis on the monitoring of quality and standards through the meta-governance of national institutions" (2010: 18).

This meta-governance is essentially made possible with the help of the EU's operation mode OMC. It enables the different national Higher Education systems to keep some elements of their traditional education systems while also adapting to the new EU Higher Education framework (Jayasuriya 2010:16). As the EU increasingly relies "on 'soft law' or flexible governance to accommodate the diversity of national economic and social governance" the OMC "allows a similar flexibility in the regulation of national Higher Education systems" (Jayasuriya 2010: 18). In his explanation of how regulatory regimes function, Jayasuriya refers to the concept of the accountability community, which he has developed.

Accountability communities are "complex, and composed of public and/or private organizations endowed with capacities to perform legislative, monitoring and compliance activities in specific functionally-based regulatory regimes within – and beyond – national boundaries" (Jayasuriya 2010: 18). Jayasuriya states that "these communities enable the location and identification of public authority – and the 'public' – to which account is given within regulatory regimes" (2010: 18). What sounds fairly complicated describes a process and a number of familiar institutions in today higher education systems. The mode of educational governance is the Bologna process which is realized by the utilization of the Regulatory Regionalism regime OMC. The accountability communities would be the national support organizations in the field of international academic co-operation – in the case of Germany, this would be the DAAD.

The DAAD has capacities which go beyond 'national boundaries' as it "supports the internationalisation of German universities, promotes German studies and the German language abroad, assists developing countries in establishing effective universities and advises decision makers on matters of cultural, education and development policy" (DAAD 2012) and as it receives its funding from both private and public partners. While the distribution of the German Erasmus Programme budget is also one of the responsibilities of the DAAD, most of its tasks transcend the national scope and are more concerned with the internationalization of German higher education. The accountability communities such as the DAAD

operate “detached from territorially specific jurisdictions” while being incorporated “into the functional regulatory regimes” (Jayasuriya 2010: 12). And similar to the DAAD, each European country has specific organizations of international academic co-operation (UK: British Council, France: Agence Europe Education Formation France, Spain: Organismo Autónomo Programas Educativos Europeos, Italy: Agenzia Nazionale LLP) (European Commission 2012b). Each specific organization is a national agent or facilitator who tries to adjust the national legal frameworks for mobility in accordance with both: national goals as well as supranational goals (in the European case for example, the Bologna accords as supranational goals).

In addition, the accountability communities also shift the focus of political discourses away from the international competitiveness of higher education to questions of quality assurance (Jayasuriya 2010: 16). According to Jayasuriya, these accountability communities act as bridgeheads between the Lisbon Agenda and the Bologna Process; the strict adherence of the quality goals and framework by the country-specific accountability communities ensures the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda in the Bologna Process (2010: 18). With a look at the links of this regulatory framework and the European Erasmus Programme as a component of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU, the so-called ‘fifth freedom’<sup>1</sup> mobility and the accountability communities which realize it (or more explicitly the free movement of knowledge) turn out to have the power to “shape and create boundaries of citizenship and publicness” (Jayasuriya 2010: 16). As the “twin process of market reform and rescaling governance has made problematic the taken for granted association between the public domain, the state and the nation” (Jayasuriya 2010: 8), the constitution and perception of the nation state and its role in the supranational organization EU are being reconstructed by means of regulatory regionalism.

While most of the measures and issues which Robertson and Jayasuriya address in regard to Regulatory Regionalism exceed the topic of student or Erasmus student exchange mobility, their analyses help to get an overview over the underlying principles and goals of European student mobility. Erasmus mobility is hereby contextualized as a strategic instrument in the Programme for Lifelong Learning, as a part of the regulatory Bologna process (realized with the use of the OMC) in order to realize the goals of the Lisbon agenda. The exercise of mobility within the EU is a key pillar of the internationalization and Europeanization processes within Europe; therefore, it is necessary to emphasize its political dimension. The idea of mobility as a comparative advantage of the EU compared to other Regulatory Regionalism governance systems in the world opens up two perspectives. Firstly, there would be the perspective that the increased emphasis of mobility

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the 4 fundamental freedoms of the common market: free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.

can be explained as a reaction to external pressures onto European higher education in order to compete with other regions. Secondly, it can be regarded as an initial move by the EU in order to compete and individualize in the higher education market. As both perspectives are valid, Erasmus mobility can be framed within the context of higher education internationalization. It is also important to remember these underlying agendas when analyzing European student mobility.

## 2.5. MAIN ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ERASMUS STUDENT EXCHANGE MOBILITY

It needs to be clarified that the boundaries between two forms of student mobility transcend and these forms of mobility are not all that different. Sometimes exchange students become degree-mobile students, as they might come to the conclusion that the circumstances at their host university are better than at their home institution. Therefore, student mobility and student exchange mobility are unavoidably linked, as student exchange mobility is one of the freedoms of mobility that are offered within the EU. The freedom of mobility within Europe can be a tool to draw non-European students to Europe. The European emphasis on student exchange mobility should be interpreted as the attempt to create a relatively unique student exchange system within a supranational region, consequently raising the attractiveness of European higher education. Scholars like King (2002: 95) or Brooks and Waters (2011: 83) highlight the lifestyle component of Erasmus mobility and see Erasmus students as beneficiaries of globalization. In regard of student mobility, this perception might change to mobility as an asset, while student exchange mobility is more regarded as a lifestyle decision with less focus on professional value. Hellmann's model of student mobilities also provides a good overview of the various forms of student mobility, with student exchange mobility as one of the possible forms. Nevertheless, even within Europe there are differences, for example, the United Kingdom still remains one of the key actors of international higher education and does not adhere to the same rules of student mobility like other European actors. Hellmann broadly categorizes Erasmus exchange student mobility in a three-tier migration system that differentiates between the case of the UK, the cases of Germany and France and some other as well as the cases of economically weaker countries.

DAAD Erasmus expert Biehl stated that Erasmus offers a basic structure with room for individualization (Biehl: 38.07) and highlights that it is a large-scale proposal for mobility in its most positive way, an introductory offer for students who have the possibility to interpret it in their own ways (Biehl: 38.33). DAAD Bologna expert Hellmann also agreed that the approach to see Erasmus mobility as "first step mobility" is the right way to perceive it, as Erasmus helps to overcome one's inhibitions (50.04) and states that students who return are free

to intensify these intercultural experiences later on (1.10.46). Nevertheless, Hellmann also emphasizes that one should not expect more than that, nor expect gains in terms of European citizenship, identity, and other specific EU aims (1.11.18–1.11.45). Anyhow, Biehl’s response that the Erasmus Programme creates sensitivities rather than identities (16.02–16.10) seems to be a good insight into addressing the European dimension of the programme. In addition, it is important to note the value of the ‘brand’ of the Erasmus Programme, Hellmann states that “he would like to tell the European Commission that it [the Erasmus Programme] is one of the few things they did that are unanimously perceived positively” and that Erasmus is a Programme which is well known, even outside of academic circles (1.20.00).

Following is a list of key components which characterize Erasmus mobility:

- a majority of female exchange students;
- a regulatory framework that lowers obstacles to mobility;
- a high degree of institutionality, and embeddedness into the regulatory framework;
- an emphasis on diversity and togetherness in a common Europe;
- Higher Education Institutions’ interest in Erasmus in the process of internationalization;
- an emphasis on economic and political objectives;
- the lifestyle component of Erasmus – being more a “consumption good” (King 2002: 95) than a form of mobility.



## Chapter 3

### **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IN SPAIN AND SELECTED RESULTS OF THE MERGE SURVEY AMONG FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS IN SPAIN**

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study is to analyse the effects of Erasmus on the mobility and employability of former students, and to identify which elements of the Erasmus experience have had the greatest impact upon their career choices and opportunities. Thus, the research will contribute to the challenges of analysing and promoting mobility within the Erasmus Programme and will help shape future thinking and policy making on a national and European level. This chapter is focused on the case of Spain and more precisely on the results of the MERGE survey among Spanish former Erasmus students.

#### 3.2. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IN SPAIN

At a recent meeting of the EU Council of Ministers for Training, Youth, Culture and Sport (10 May 2012), the Spanish Minister of Education stated that the “Erasmus for All Programme” was especially significant to Spain because it had enabled young Spaniards to discover what being European means. He also remarked that this fact had accounted for the success of the programme in Spain. With over 355,500 Spanish students having gone on the Erasmus programme since 1987, Spain is currently the country sending most students to the Erasmus programme and also the country that hosts the largest number of Erasmus students. He affirmed that it was an honour for Spain to be the leading sender and host nation for Erasmus students. The minister concluded by pointing out that the Erasmus Programme does not only look to foster mobility but also exchange of knowledge, and thus improve the quality of our young people’s knowledge. He pointed out that a reference to European values had been included as one of the mobility programme objectives.

Basque Government Councillor of Education Isabel Celaá also gave her opinion on the importance of student mobility. In a statement to the Basque Parliament (2.03.2012), she highlighted the key importance of the programme and also noted the high mobility levels in countries that are not part of the Erasmus Programme. In her parliamentary response, Councillor Celaá stated that the impact of mobility was highly significant at the personal level as well as for acquisition of language skills because students attended classes at host universities where they approached subjects from other perspectives and educational methods. She also stressed the importance of the programme at the present time of crisis when the general EU budget is not being increased, noting that this category has registered an increase of 70% over the current amount.

Normally, most of the time when we refer to mobility, we are speaking of mobility of a temporary duration. This period may be variable and, generally speaking, does not exceed the duration of the academic year. However, we should take into account the type of mobility that lasts for a longer period of time and the purpose of which is to access academic programmes taught at universities other than those in the autonomous community (region) where the student is originally from – mainly within their own country. This type of mobility among university students within the SUE (Spanish University System) is very low. Broadly speaking, universities have a great level of dependence on students from the same autonomous community. More specifically, over 90% of students at university establishments from 10 communities come from the same community as where the university is located (Ministry of Education, 2012: 30). The reasons for such low levels of mobility between autonomous communities could be found, on the one hand, as a result of the major territorial dispersion of universities that means in most cases that it is not necessary to move from one's own province or autonomous community in order to pursue university studies and, on the other, due to the wide range of course on offer of both a general and more specialist nature at universities – all of them offering syllabuses leading to very similar qualifications.

According to these data, students who evidence the least academic mobility are those from Andalusia, Catalonia, Madrid and the Autonomous Community of Valencia, as they offer the widest range of university options. It should be taken into account that these communities are the largest in terms of student numbers, range of qualifications offered and university places, and also the ones that offer the greatest variety of qualifications. The autonomous communities with the highest rate of theoretical mobility are Castile-La Mancha and La Rioja (only 50.3% and 48.4% of their university students pursue their students in those communities respectively). However, the fact of moving from one autonomous community to another does not imply real movement, as for instance 33.1% of students in Castile-La Mancha who reside in that community look to Madrid

to carry out their university studies. These are journeys that can in many cases be made on a daily basis without involving the need to change one's residence during the school year.

In short, we could say that Spanish university students hardly move from their autonomous community to pursue their studies, and when they do, it is to neighbouring communities without this requiring a change of residence in most cases. Related to this fact, the limited range of accommodation existing within the SUE should also be taken into account.

We should add that comparative analyses of the Spanish higher education system (González González, Arquero Montaña, & Hassall 2009) point out that, together with logistic reasons and considerations regarding the range of courses on offer, a cultural context also exists of limited academic mobility among future teaching staff, in view of the way in which contracting is carried out:

There seems to be an implicit agreement among Spanish universities (that is to say, an agreement incorporated in Spanish university culture) which establishes that students who completed their doctorate and undergraduate studies at a particular university have priority for teaching contracts at that particular university. In summary, universities would rather contract or promote their own teachers than contract or promote teachers from other universities even if those present better qualifications. Contrary to evidence of a mobility culture of both students and academics in the UK, in Spain the permanence of residence in the city of origin is highly valued both by students and teachers. (González González, Arquero Montaña & Hassall 2009: 120)

When we refer to temporary mobility, we tend to think of a stay abroad and programmes like Erasmus. Suffice it to say that mobility not only takes place outside somebody's country, but also within the country itself, and via programmes such as Séneca. This type of mobility is not so much geared towards putting into practice of the foreign language(s) as to serve more pragmatic purposes, such as access to different academic programmes, which may vary significantly, depending on the university being taken into consideration.

Séneca is a programme that promotes internal mobility within Spain. It has a lesser impact than the Erasmus programme due, on the one hand, to the greater appeal of being abroad and, on the other, to the investment made – and also taking into account the fact that the number of students on the programme is always lower than the grants awarded. In other words, the number of applications for grants is relatively high and yet, once all the grants have been awarded, not all applicants take advantage of them. Thus, in the academic year (2011–2012), 5,729 applications were submitted, 2,033 grants were awarded and ultimately only 1,871 students actually took advantage of them (Ministry of Education, 2012: 33).

Taking this context as a starting point, this literature review focuses on a concept of mobility that coincides in its basic approach with the proposal put forward by Morón Martín (2009: 178), who refers to mobility as a:



Period of study by a student enrolled in higher education at an overseas educational establishment with whom a prior partnership agreement exists in accordance with EU initiatives (such as Erasmus/Socrates-Erasmus, etc.), thanks to which the participant may receive certain financial assistance to help defray the costs of their stay. This study period may either be voluntary or determined by the syllabus being followed by the student at their university of origin (in the case of the United Kingdom). Duration is variable but generally speaking does not exceed one school year and at the end, the studies carried out at the host institution are recognised as being equivalent to those at the university of origin.

Thus, we might refer to the work carried out by the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Pineda Herrero, Moreno Andrés, Belvis Pons 2007, 2008) as being the main study in this particular field, in which the mobility of Erasmus and Sicue (Spanish Intranational Mobility Programme) students within the EU and within the Spanish university context is researched. This is done by analysing the mobility programmes in place at the Education Faculties of five representative Spanish universities (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Autonomous University of Madrid, University of Valencia, University of the Basque Country and University of Seville).

The results obtained indicated that participation in a mobility programme was not an isolated decision that depended only on personal characteristics. Rather, it covers a series of factors that facilitate or inhibit it and are linked to the family and relational context, features of the programmes and their promotion and dissemination within university environments. The authors have thus drawn up a conceptual map of those factors that influence mobility as follows (Tab. 3.1).

Table 3.1. Classification of reasons influencing student mobility

REASONS THAT INFLUENCE MOBILITY	
Professional academic reasons	Personal reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn a language</li> <li>• Improve one's CV</li> <li>• Improve one's student's record</li> <li>• Interest in a specific programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek a new experience</li> <li>• Break from routine</li> <li>• Seek independence</li> <li>• Meet people</li> <li>• Find out about another culture</li> </ul>
Influences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family attitude</li> <li>• Socio-economic level</li> <li>• Friends' influence</li> </ul>	Other reasons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have obtained positive references</li> <li>• Desire to travel</li> <li>• Financial assistance</li> <li>• Participation in other programmes</li> </ul>

The main conclusions that have been drawn from this study are that:

Mobility is conditioned by a profile of students who seek personal maturity, the experience of tourism and leisure and to gain a professional profile. Despite the fact that programmes meet this need, it is noted that there are no equal opportunities in terms of participation owing to the socio-economic and cultural origin of the participants. Furthermore, faculties and university colleges do not, as would be expected, have an influence on the promotion and dissemination of the programmes themselves. Although all participant students would repeat the experience, it would nonetheless be desirable to broaden opportunities and adapt the reality of the situation to certain objectives pursued by programmes, in reference to academic European identity-related reasons (in the case of Erasmus students). (Pineda Herrero, Moreno Andrés., Belvis Pons 2008:385)

This study ends with a series of proposals for universities, public administrative bodies and the EU, with a view to improving and stimulating mobility, increasing equal opportunities regarding access to it, and optimizing the attainment of its objectives.

Another recent line of research, which is more guided by quantitative methodology, is the study of mobility flows of students *via* application of the eligibility index. The eligibility index is a tool that enables the direction pursued by students to be revealed by quantifying their preferred destinations. This is the line of work carried out by the Autonomous University of Madrid (Valle, & Garrido 2009), in which the authors research mobility flows within the Erasmus programme from the latest available data (2008) and applying the eligibility index. The conclusions drawn from the analysis clearly show the asymmetry between mobility flows of the programme and also draw attention to those countries with greater 'potential for appeal' to Erasmus students, among which is included Spain – which is the subject of special focus. Their data and analyses show the following:

- a global asymmetry between mobility flows of Erasmus students,
- that there are some countries that clearly 'import' and others that clearly 'export' Erasmus students,
- the 'potential for appeal' of the different countries, rated according to the eligibility index, evidences differences that evolve over time,
- among the five most populated countries in the European Union, it turns out that Spain is currently (school year 2007–2008) also the country with the greatest 'potential for appeal' (0.92).

This study refers to the mobility situation in Spain from a descriptive standpoint, which is why it only points to certain variables that might explain the reasons for the situation it describes in its final conclusions. Among these, attention should be drawn to the inclusion of new countries in the programme, the differential in lifestyle between the students' country of origin and the host country, cultural links, gentler climates that might prove more enticing, and countries whose cultural traditions are the subject of major focus overseas, etc.

In view of these possible reasons, the study raises two hypotheses to help explain Spain's high potential for appeal:

1) the importance of the language of the host country within an international context. "Taking into account the number of speakers, not for nothing is Spanish the third most-spoken language in the world and the official language in 21 countries." (Valle & Garrido 2009: 126),

2) the degree of internationalization of universities. "What has led to such dynamism when signing international agreements and, therefore, when attracting more students from other countries, together with the drive on the part of our own universities to reach out to overseas ones." (Valle & Garrido 2009: 126).

To sum up, we could say that there are not so many studies carried out in Spain about university student mobility, and research about them tends to focus on analysing the situation from a descriptive standpoint. This is done by analysing data, frequency, indexes or opinion polls, which in no way belittles a job that involves an arduous task owing to the lack of or difficulty in finding reliable information, in addition to the high costs that possible macro-surveys entail. In this respect, once the mobility situation has been described, one should consider the need for research that attempts more to explain or understand the purpose of the study using more qualitative approaches. Data of a qualitative nature could help to interpret other quantitative data, and might also constitute a major starting point towards constructing a working hypothesis with a view to designing other research work (whether qualitative or quantitative) (Buendía 1998).

As Valle & Garrido (2009: 126) point out: "We have to learn from the students who come here and from what those that have gone overseas tell us. Exchanging experiences and information about ways of doing things and ways of operating is, out of necessity, one of the keys to approaching the type of coordination that the EHEA entails."

This section addresses some facts and figures on international students and Erasmus in Spain, the Basque Country and the University of Deusto.

### **3.2.1. International students in Spain**

In relative terms, the number of foreign students attending Spanish universities has remained stable. 4.6% of the total students enrolled in official university studies are foreign. There are more foreign students at higher levels of university studies. Only 3.3% of the students enrolled in Bachelor's degrees and first and second cycle programmes are foreign while this figure rises to 16.9% for Master's degree programmes and to 24.7% for Ph.D. courses (Tab. 3.2).

Table 3.2. Foreign students enrolled in Spanish universities

	Academic year: 2010–2011				Academic year: 2009–2010			
	Total	Foreign students			Total	Foreign students		
		Total	%	EU-27		Total	%	EU-27
Total	1,576,656	72,101	40.6	24,315	1,529,769	70,549	40.6	21,957
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cycle	897,595	26,625	30.0	10,777	1,200,763	36,869	30.1	12,891
Undergrad. prog.	547,797	20,967	30.8	7,817	203,352	8,354	40.1	30,111
Master prog.	100,963	17,031	16.9	4,074	81,840	15,088	18.4	30,656
Ph.D. programmes	30,301	7,478	24.7	1,647	43,814	10,238	23.4	20,299

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. Data and Figures regarding the Spanish University Systems, school year 2011–2012.

As we can see in the distribution of foreign students enrolled in first and second cycle studies and undergraduate programmes, the main chosen degrees were Social Sciences and Law, and Engineering and Architecture (Fig. 3.1).

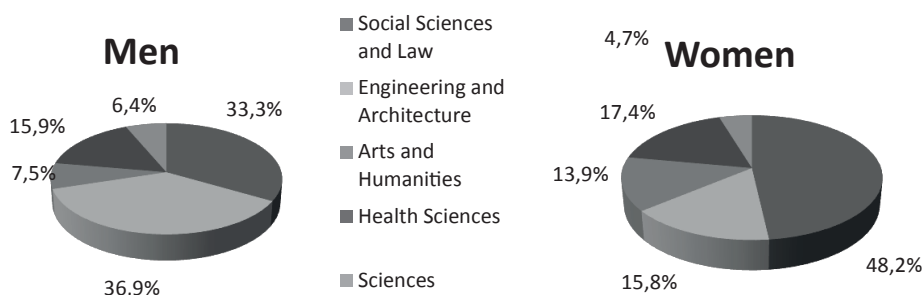


Figure 3.1. Distribution of foreign students enrolled in 1st and 2nd cycles and Bachelor's programmes by degrees. Academic year 2010–2011

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. Data and Figures regarding the Spanish University Systems, school year 2011–2012. (2012)

In first and second cycle degree programmes, students from the EU-27, Latin America and the Caribbean were the most numerous (39.1% and 33.3% respectively) (Fig. 3.2). There was a minority of students from other areas at this level of studies, with students from the U.S. and Canada barely accounting for 1.2% of the total foreign students at this level.

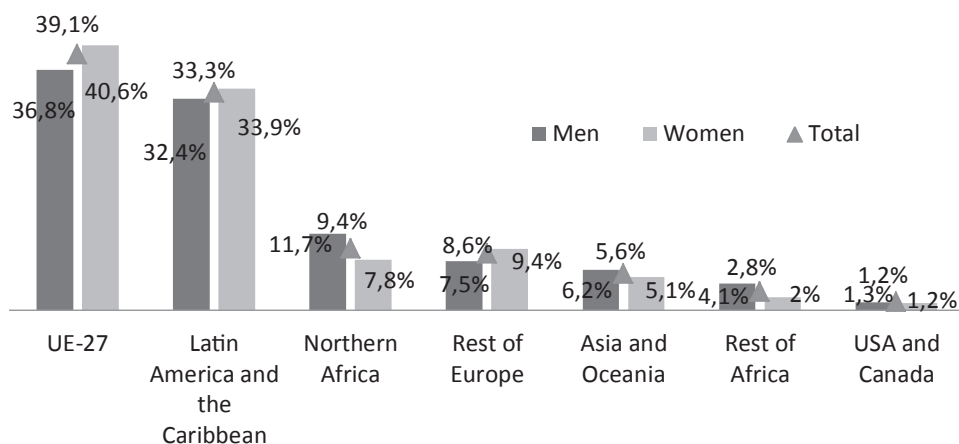


Figure 3.2. Distribution of foreign students enrolled in 1st and 2nd cycles and Bachelor's programmes by sex and country of origin. Academic year 2010–2011

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. Data and Figures regarding the Spanish University Systems, school year 2011–2012.

In relative terms, distribution of foreign students in Master's degree programmes is different: 56.2% come from Latin America and the Caribbean and approximately one fourth, 23.9%, come from the EU–27. Students from other areas are a minority, although those from Asia and Oceania are more numerous, accounting for 8.6%. An even higher number of students from Latin America and the Caribbean are enrolled in Ph.D. courses, accounting for 62.7% in comparison to 22% from the EU–27. Students from the United States and Canada, Asia and Oceania account for a very small number of the total foreign students. However, the figure is slightly higher in Master's degree programmes. 41.3% of U.S. and Canadian students attending university in Spain are completing Master's degrees (the percentage is 32% for Asia and Oceania). These students come to Spain to study specialist degrees.

There are no great differences between foreign and Spanish students when the distribution by age is compared. However, in general terms, students from the rest of Europe, Asia and Oceania are younger than Spanish students at each level of studies (Fig. 3.3).

31.2% of students from the EU–27 that come to Spain to do a Master's degree are under 25, in comparison with 24.6% of Spanish students. However, students from Latin America and the Caribbean, who account for the majority of foreign students in Spain, are older than Spanish students. Only 11.4% of the Master's degree students are under 25, in comparison with 24.6% of Spanish students. 10.4% are over 40 and 40.5% are over 31. This is also the case for Ph.D. courses. 73.1% of the students from Latin America and the Caribbean are over 31, in comparison with 52.7% of Spaniards.

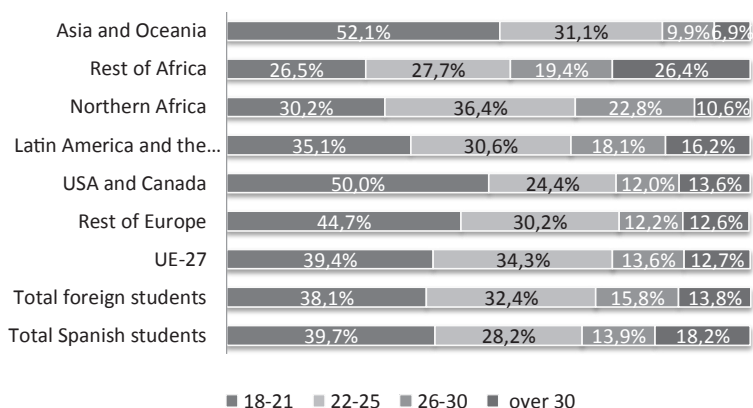


Figure 3.3. Distribution of foreign students enrolled in 1st and 2nd cycles and Bachelor's programmes by age groups and country of origin. Academic year 2010–2011  
Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. Data and Figures regarding the Spanish University Systems, school year 2011–2012.

### 3.2.2. Erasmus in Spain

Erasmus is Spain's leading international mobility programme. It is run by the Autonomous European Educational Programmes Organisation (OAPEE) in Spain. During the 2010–2011 academic year, 33,616 Spanish students studied abroad, marking a 17.2% increase over the previous year. In spite of the high number of Spanish students going abroad (31,158), even more European students enter Spain (35,389) (Fig. 3.4).

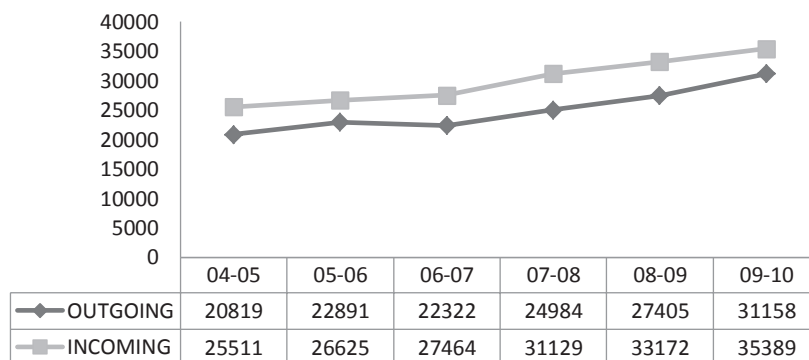


Figure 3.4. Erasmus mobility in Spain 2004–2010

The favourite Erasmus outgoing destinations for Spanish students are: Italy (22.7%), France (13.5%) United Kingdom (11.2%) and Germany (10.6%) (Fig. 3.5). All of the top destinations for outgoing Spanish students on the Erasmus Programme have registered increases during the period analysed.

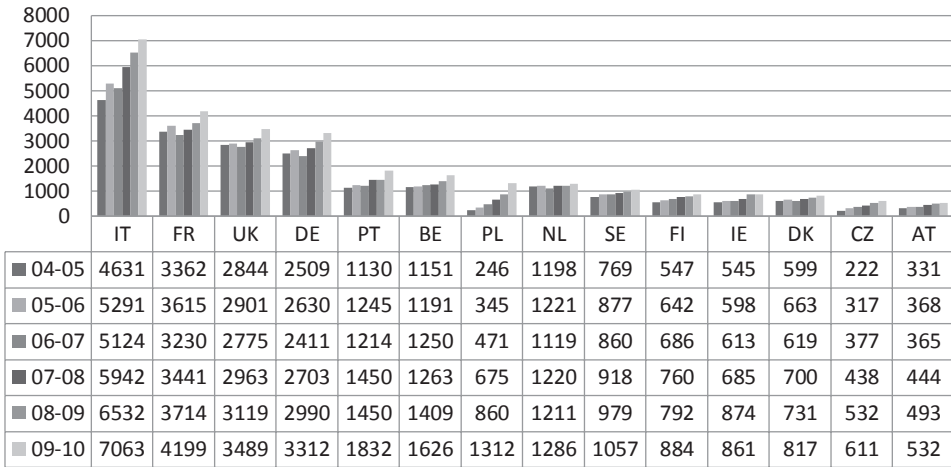


Figure 3.5. Erasmus outgoing students from Spain by major destination countries

Most of the incoming Erasmus students to Spain are from: Italy (20.3%), France (19.3%), Germany (16.6%) and United Kingdom (7.6%).

Sex plays a key role in the age of students enrolled in the Erasmus Programme. Women students are younger (52.3% are between 18 and 21) than men (55.8% are between 22 and 25 and 9% are between 26 and 30).

### 3.2.3. Erasmus in the Basque Country

From 2004 to 2010, a total of 6,285 Basque university students attended different European Union universities through the Erasmus Programme, while 4,969 came to the Basque Country to study. During this six year period, the University of the Basque Country sent out the largest number of students (4,036), followed by the University of Deusto (2,470), and Mondragon University, with a significantly lower number (346 students) (Fig. 3.6).

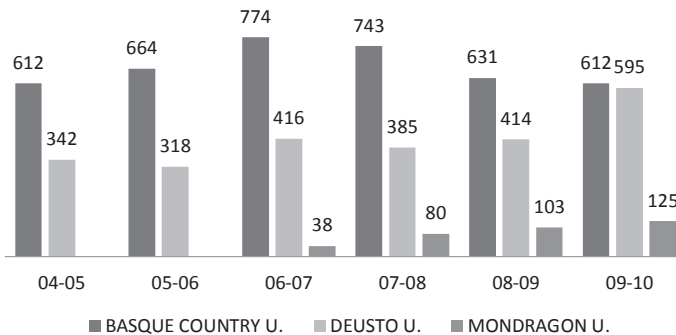


Figure 3.6. Erasmus outgoing students from the Basque region by university in 2004–2010

### 3.2.4. Erasmus at the University of Deusto

During the period under study, 4,020 students from the University of Deusto went on the Erasmus Programme. Participation in the programme has gradually increased to reach 71.5% of outgoing students in the last 7 years. The participation rate in the Erasmus programme at the University of Deusto, understood as the proportion of Erasmus students in comparison to the total number of university students (the total number of students enrolled in first, second and third-cycle courses), shows values which are clearly higher than in the rest of Spain and higher than the European average in recent years (Fig. 3.7).

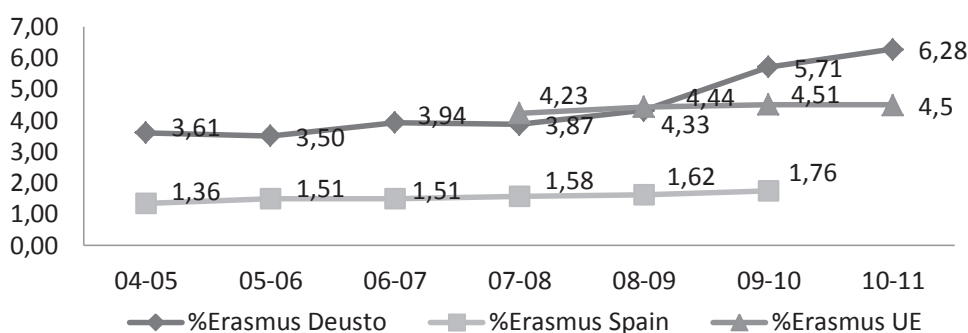


Figure 3.7. Erasmus students as proportion of university graduates (2004/2005–2010/2011)  
Source: author's own with data provided by the University of Deusto (2013)

At the University of Deusto, gender is also a key factor in participation in the Erasmus programme. More women students have taken part in the programme over the years, accounting for 62% of the total outgoing students in the 2010-2011 academic year in comparison with 38% of men.

The most common destinations for outgoing students from the University of Deusto are: United Kingdom (20%), Netherlands (19%), Germany (11%), France (9%) and Italy (8%).

In relative terms, the number of undergraduate students on the Erasmus programme has remained stable at the University of Deusto. Of the total university students who went on the programme during the period analysed (2004–2005 and 2011–2012), 81.7% were undergraduate students. The number of postgraduate students taking part in the Erasmus Programme has increased in recent years, accounting for 34.6% of the total in the 2011–2012 academic year.

By academic areas, the faculties at the University of Deusto that sent the highest numbers of students on the Erasmus Programme during the period analysed were: Economics and Business Administration (40%), Social and Human Sciences (29%), Law (11%), Engineering (11%) and Psychology and Education (8%) (Fig. 3.8).



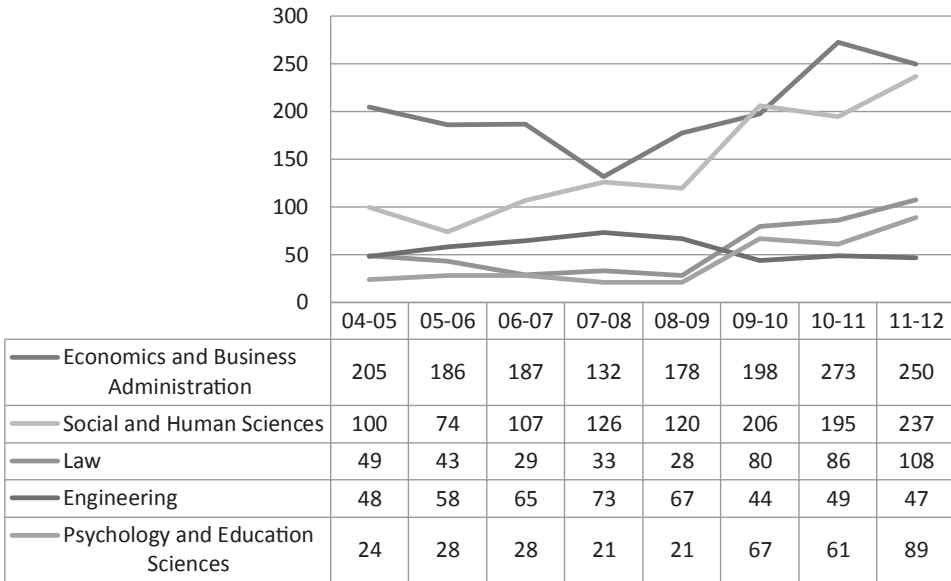


Figure 3.8. Outgoing Erasmus students from the University of Deusto by faculty (2004/2005–2011/2012)

Source: author’s own with data provided by the University of Deusto (2013)

### 3.3. RESULTS OF THE MERGE SURVEY

The MERGE (Mobility and Employability Research for Generation Erasmus) project was based on a mixed methodology, which was developed to gather data, using the partner universities as case studies. The quantitative approach was based on questionnaires, which helped to identify the general mobility and employability patterns of the former Erasmus in the four partner universities.

The results obtained at the University of Deusto through the questionnaire developed to collect the evidences on the former Erasmus students in the project MERGE are shown in the following section. Sample consists of n = 133 participants that have studied abroad for at least a semester or trimester between 2000/1 and 2010/11 academic year. Most of them are women (62%) and half of them are studying at Bachelor level (51%). The subjects of studies are led by Business and Law (33%), Engineering (21%) and Social Sciences (16%) (Fig. 3.9).

Results show that the international mobility of these students occurs mainly during the degree (78%), just once (92%), and in English (72%) (followed by Italian and French). Also the main motivations for international student mobility are related to experiential factors (new experiences, knowing other culture and developing language skills). About the perceptions, the results obtained at the Uni-

versity of Deusto emphasize that the experience abroad is evaluated as too short (72.9%), very satisfying (6.7 out of 7), and their impact is large on the subsequent mobility (6.3). The participants consider that the main consequences of the experience of studying abroad are related to intercultural aspects (international friendships, knowledge exchanges, international sense) and personal skills related to autonomy and self-confidence (Fig. 3.10).

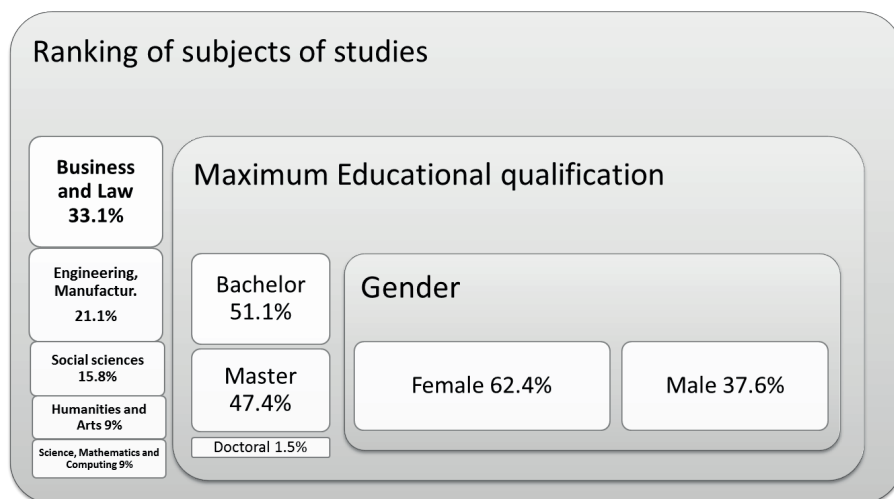


Figure 3.9. Sample characteristics  
Source: Author's own (2013)

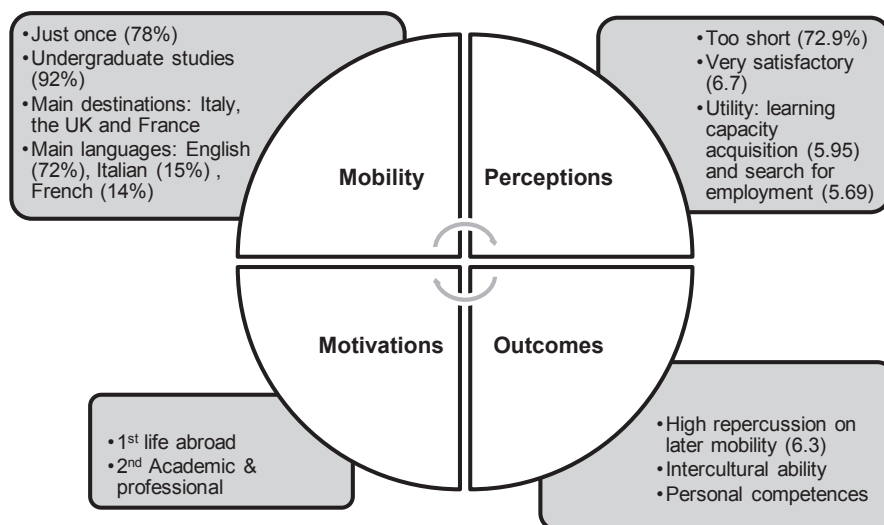


Figure 3.10. International mobility characteristics  
Source: Author's own (2013)

The Erasmus experience seems to influence positively the future mobility of graduates, because a quarter of the participants (24.8%) currently live abroad, and 31.6 percent of the participants considered themselves likely or very likely to go to live abroad in the near future (within the next year) (Fig. 3.11). In terms of employability, respondents who currently live abroad affirmed that the greatest motivation are professional factors, which contrasts with relational factors (partner/family and friends) mentioned by those who chose not to emigrate.

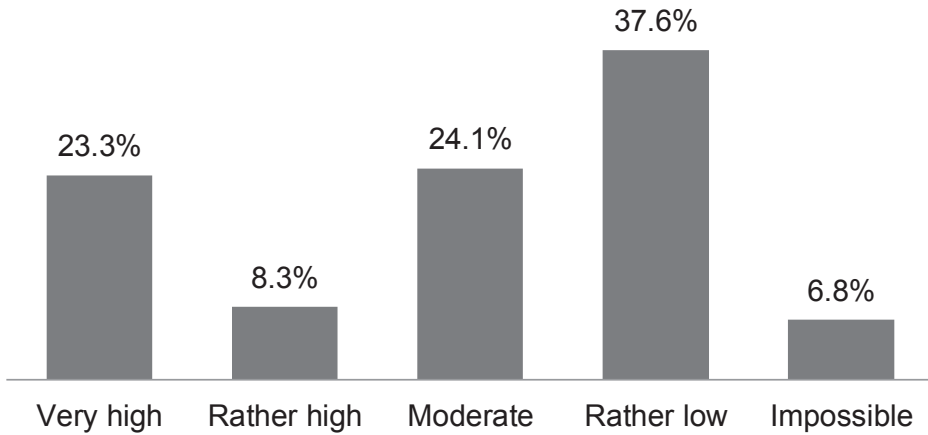


Figure 3.11. Likelihood of going to live abroad during the following year  
Source: Author's own (2013)

The employability characteristics of participants can be summarised in high employability, with an international character and influenced by the mobility. Regarding the employability, the results obtained exhibit that students have a high percentage of continuity in employment since graduation (80%), a high level of unlimited contracts (50%), a good job position (employment qualified and managerial positions) and also, highlight that, in most cases, the self-perceived congruence of the respondents' work with their education level is very high, where the 83.5% corresponds to jobs related to their studies or related area. Regarding the international character, given the global nature of the sample, 66.2% of people work in companies that operate in the international context, and a half have worked abroad (50.4%) (Fig. 3.12). Furthermore, the influence of mobility should be noted, since most respondents consider that the main aspects (excluding higher education) that have influenced their work / profession (foreign language proficiency and international experience) are related to participation in mobility programs.



Figure 3.12. Employability characteristics  
Source: Author's own (2013)

### 3.4. CONCLUSION

Participants value favourably the impact of the Erasmus programme on their personal experience, on their disposition towards later mobility and on their career opportunities in the international area. Regarding personal experience, students highlight the acquisition of language skills (where English plays a dominant role, followed by Spanish, German and French), intercultural understanding, international friends and personal autonomy. The motivations for international student mobility are related to new experiences, developing language skills and knowing other culture. Learning abroad prepares individuals with a wide range of skills that are increasingly valued by employers such as foreign languages, adaptability and greater intercultural awareness. In this way, student mobility increases job prospects and encourages labour market mobility in the future. Qualitative information of experiences and expectations of Erasmus students will be gathered by means of social networking websites. Similarly, results of this study will help students, universities and the European Commission better evaluate the effectiveness of the Erasmus programme, now that the “Erasmus for all” new programme is going to be implemented by the EC.

By identifying the effects of mobility on future mobility and employability opportunities, this study will make a contribution to making the Erasmus programme more attractive, therefore helping improve the quality and accessibility of the opportunities for lifelong learning. Greater mobility helps to develop active interaction among people and cultures. Hence, it will help reinforce the contribution of lifelong learning to social cohesion, active citizenship, and personal fulfilment. It will also help to reinforce the role of lifelong learning in creating a sense of European citizenship based on the understanding and respect for human rights and democracy, and encouraging tolerance.

## Chapter 4

### THE GERMAN CASE STUDY OF THE MERGE PROJECT

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz (JGU) is one of the oldest universities in Germany. It was established in 1477 (re-established by the French forces after the Second World War in 1946). With about 37,000 students from about 130 nations, it is one of the largest institutions in the country. The university has a strong internationalization policy. The international orientation is supported by a network of 145 cooperating partner universities on all continents. There are 700 cooperation agreements with European partner universities in the ERASMUS program; about 11% of the students come from abroad and it has been awarded the DAAD ERASMUS Quality Label E-Quality 2011 for the third time (2004 and 2007) for its outstanding implementation of the ERASMUS student mobility program.

Four major factors frame the internationalization of the university and the international mobility of its students. First, JGU offers, among others, strong programs in languages and linguistics at the renowned Faculty of Translation Studies, Linguistics and Cultural Studies and “Mainzer Polonicum” (School of Polish Studies), internationally recognized programs in physics and chemistry as well as popular programs in medicine, law, geosciences, economics, theology, art and sports. Second, the city of Mainz is located in the cosmopolitan and economically powerful Frankfurt Metropolitan Area (Rhine-Main-Metropolitan Region – RMMR) that offers excellent career chances for the university graduates, for exchange students to establish contacts with local businesses and offers a wide range of student jobs. The strongest economic sectors in the region are global due to their business nature: financial services and banking, logistics, tourism and travel, media and publishing, chemical industries and education and research. Third, Mainz is the capital of the Rhineland-Palatinate feder-

al state in the South-West region of Germany at the French-Benelux borders. While the city and the state were part of the French occupation zone after WWII, the larger parts of the RMMR (Frankfurt city itself and the state of Hess) were parts of the US occupation zone. This duality has been reflected in massive and well-established learning of the English and French languages in the schools. The good command of both these foreign languages facilitates the mobility of the students and increases the chances of successful students' exchange programs. More than 650 university courses are conducted today in JGU in languages other than German, mainly in English and French. Fourth, due to the strong migratory character of the residents of the RMMR, there is a significant number of population of non-German origins (up to 50% in the city of Frankfurt and to 25% in the city of Mainz) and big number of bi-national families. Trans-cultural and transnational networks as well as established diaspora communities contributing substantially to the students and academic mobility and to the internationalization of the higher education.

In this specific case study, we aim to highlight the dynamics and the impacts of the ERASMUS program on the mobility of the graduates of the JGU. The case study is divided in two parts and conclusions: the first part deals with the statistics of students' mobility and the second part deals with issues of mobility patterns, decision making to study abroad, students' perception of Europe after their ERASMUS-exchange experience(s) and the impact of their student mobility on their career mobility.

#### 4.2. STATISTICAL DATA ON ERASMUS MOBILITY AT THE JGU

At the University of Mainz, there is a significant gap between the number of incoming and outgoing students. Over the last couple of years, there has always been more than twice the number of outgoing students than the number of students coming to Mainz within the Erasmus programme. While the incoming students are not relevant for this research framework, it is important to state that the JGU clearly has a negative incoming/outgoing student ratio, as it sends a lot more students abroad than it receives. Hence the term student exchange mobility is relative, as reciprocity is hardly achieved and there were almost 2.36 Erasmus outgoing students from Mainz for every incoming student (based on the numbers from 2009/10) (JGU 2013a). This observation is particularly true for popular Erasmus countries like the UK, Spain and the Scandinavian countries. Therefore, the JGU is still looking for ways to increase its attractivity for Erasmus students in order to achieve some balance. As all the bilateral interchange agreements rely on reciprocity, the JGU states that it is looking to work on this deficit (JGU 2013b). In 2010/11, all of the subjects that can be studied at the JGU were participating

in the Erasmus programme (except for Indology). There were 350 partner universities and 31 possible destination countries. Altogether, there are 120 Erasmus coordinators at the JGU, one in each respective subject. In 2001/02, the University of Mainz received 426,000€ Erasmus subsidies and in 2010/11 the total of subsidies was 720,000€ (International Office JGU 2011).

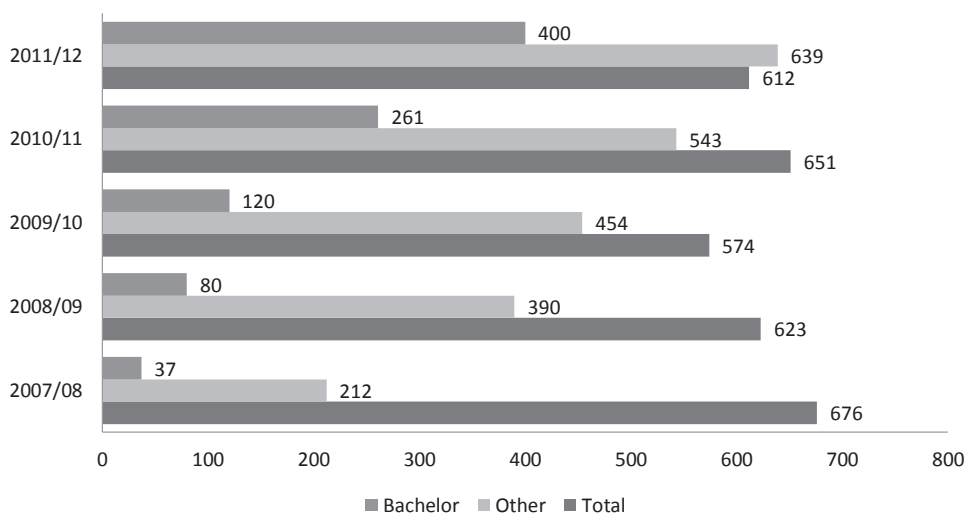


Figure 4.1. Erasmus outgoing students from the JGU by the level of studies  
Source: JGU 2012

A closer look at the numbers of Erasmus students from the University of Mainz reveals that between 2006/07 and 2009/10 the number of students who decided to go abroad within the Erasmus programme has slowly decreased from 578 to 505. The number of incoming students was somewhat inconsistent, with a peak of 277 students in 2007/08 – but these numbers decreased until 2009/10 to 214. What is interesting about figure 4.1, and in regard to the Bologna Accords, is that the number of Bachelor students going abroad with Erasmus has constantly increased as well as the number of students in the old degree system has constantly decreased. Clearly this is not as much of a surprise, but in the case of Mainz, it should be kept in mind that most subjects introduced the Bachelor title around 2007–2008 (relatively late even for Germany); therefore it took some time until the Bachelor students could gain their share in Erasmus mobility.

A closer look at table 1 provides insight into the development of the numbers of Erasmus outgoings from the JGU. First, it is interesting to look at the total of students studying abroad: in the timeframe from 2006/07–2012/13 the highest



total of Erasmus students was in 2007/08 with 676 students from Mainz studying abroad within the Erasmus Programme. In the winter semester 2007/08, the first fields of study at Mainz offered to study in the new Bachelor/Master programmes. The adjustment to the Bologna Accords also took its toll in the total number of Erasmus students studying abroad. From 2007/08 until 2011/12, the total of students studying abroad fell and could not reach the level of the years before the Bologna Accords. Nevertheless, in 2012/13 there are about 644 (numbers not entirely available) Erasmus students from Mainz studying at other European universities, which brings the total of Erasmus students from Mainz to the level of 2006/07. At the JGU of Mainz, the top six Erasmus destination countries in 2012/13 were France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Poland.

According to the university Erasmus programme coordinators, Mediterranean countries but also countries whose languages are taught in German schools are the most popular Erasmus destination countries for students from Mainz. In addition, the demand for English-speaking countries as Erasmus destination is very high; nevertheless, due to the relatively low number of exchange scholarships with the UK, students either need to go to non-European English speaking countries or study in a non-English speaking country where institutions offer English-speaking degree programmes. When looking at the development of the number of students from Mainz going to these countries during the time-frame 2006/07–2012/13, Spain and the UK are the countries with clearly decreasing numbers. In table 1, the growth rates (based on the numbers of 2006/07 and 2012/13) are highlighted. Of the 28 Erasmus countries in the overview, 11 countries have a relatively constant number of Erasmus students when one compares the numbers from 2006/07 with the numbers of 2012/13. The growth rates of only two countries have decreased and eleven countries' numbers have increased. Of the 11 countries whose growth rates seem to be relatively stable, it is noteworthy to highlight that this list includes the top six Erasmus countries: France, Spain, the UK, Italy as well as Sweden. For France, Spain, the UK and Italy, the numbers were higher in 2006/07 than they were in 2012/13 (even though some data was not yet available for this year). The two countries with decreasing growth rates only play a minor role in terms of Erasmus mobility from Mainz; the total of students going to Belgium in 2012/13 is eight and the total of students going to Denmark is seven.

Of the eleven countries with increasing growth rates, there are six countries in which the total of Erasmus students is ten or higher (per semester): these more significant countries with positive growth rates are Austria, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal as well as Turkey. When only looking at the numbers of the last three semesters, France, Spain, and Poland's numbers increased; the UK, Finland, and Switzerland had totals which were significantly lower than three years before (Tab. 4.1).

Table 4.1. Development of the number of outgoing Erasmus students from JGU Mainz

Country	Total							Growth Rate 06-13 (%)
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Austria	11	13	20	13	15	16	19	73
Belgium	12	17	10	8	11	5	8	-33
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Cyprus	1	0	0	3	1	2	1	0
Czech Republic	4	5	3	4	7	11	9	125
Denmark	10	11	7	11	7	10	7	-30
Estonia	1	1	3	0	0	1	2	100
Finland	11	11	14	9	15	10	9	-18
France	201	185	169	161	161	168	179	-11
Greece	1	11	5	5	6	6	6	500
Hungary	3	4	3	3	4	8	7	133
Iceland	4	4	1	4	3	3	2	-50
Ireland	8	8	9	6	10	11	10	25
Italy	66	71	53	45	65	42	63	-5
Latvia	4	4	3	4	1	1	9	125
Luxembourg	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Malta	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
Netherlands	9	10	8	5	8	11	7	-22
Norway	9	10	17	15	17	11	14	56
Poland	24	30	28	27	28	28	35	46
Portugal	10	15	14	11	14	11	14	40
Romania	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	
Spain	137	114	117	97	106	112	113	-18
Sweden	38	45	37	36	44	39	42	11
Switzerland	11	12	11	20	21	14	11	0
Turkey	5	9	8	9	16	15	13	160
United Kingdom	80	82	80	74	73	63	61	-24
Total	662	676	623	573	638	601	644	-3

	= Countries with a growing number of Erasmus students from Mainz (> 25%)
	= Countries with a relatively constant number of Erasmus students from Mainz (-25-25%)
	= Countries with a decreasing number of Erasmus students from Mainz (< -25%)

Source: data provided by the International Office of the JGU.

In general, it can be stated that the more recent EU member states and Eastern European countries do not seem to be very attractive for students from Mainz. Saskia Mahal, from the Erasmus office of the international office of the JGU, stated that “generally, from western to eastern European countries, the [student’s] interest [in Erasmus exchange places] decreases”. Both the impact and share of countries such as Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia are really low for Erasmus students from the JGU. Nevertheless, some countries which one could expect to be more popular (due to climate and/or language), are not really important for Erasmus mobility from Mainz: Belgium, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, Finland or Malta.

Table 4.2. Erasmus gender ratio 2003/04–2012/13 at the JGU

2003/04–2012/13	Female	Male	Ratio Female/Male Students
6284	4452 70.8%	1832 29.2%	2,4

Source: data provided by the International Office of the JGU.

Regarding Erasmus destination cities of JGU students in 2010/11, it is striking that the majority of these possible Erasmus destinations which were not used are in Eastern Europe: namely in Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and also Turkey. Nevertheless, even in more popular Erasmus countries such as Italy, Finland, Spain, Switzerland or Belgium some Erasmus spots could not be assigned to students from Mainz or students cancelled their Erasmus stays. Another interesting aspect of Erasmus student mobility from the JGU can be seen in table 3, which shows the distribution of female and male Erasmus students from Mainz from 2003/04 until 2012/13. Almost 71% of the Erasmus students are female (Tab. 4.2), for every male student there are per ratio 2.4 female students. Consequently, male Erasmus students of the JGU are less mobile than the German average student (62% female Erasmus students in Germany).

### 4.3. SUMMARY OF THE MERGE CASE STUDY RESULTS

#### 4.3.1. The participants of the MERGE case study

About 72% of the participants in the case study are female, 28% male – the median date of birth would be February 1983, the oldest participant being born in October 1976, and the youngest in June 1988. 95% of the participants

are German, only 3 people (2%) are French – and additionally, there was respectively one Turkish, Spanish, Italian and Polish participant. 122 of 148 participants are living in Germany, 5 in Switzerland, 4 in France, 4 in the UK, 2 in Belgium, Italy and Austria. 36% Magister graduates and 30% Diplom graduates make up the majority of graduates, 11% of the participants have doctoral degrees, 10% have the “Staatsexamen”(for teachers), 9% have a Master’s degree 3% have a Bachelor’s degree. Humanities and Arts are the dominant subject among the participants (37%), followed by the social sciences (18%), then science, mathematics and computing (14%), which are followed by ‘other’ (10%) and education (9%) (Fig. 4.2) (Al-Hamarnah and Schubert 2013: 42–49).

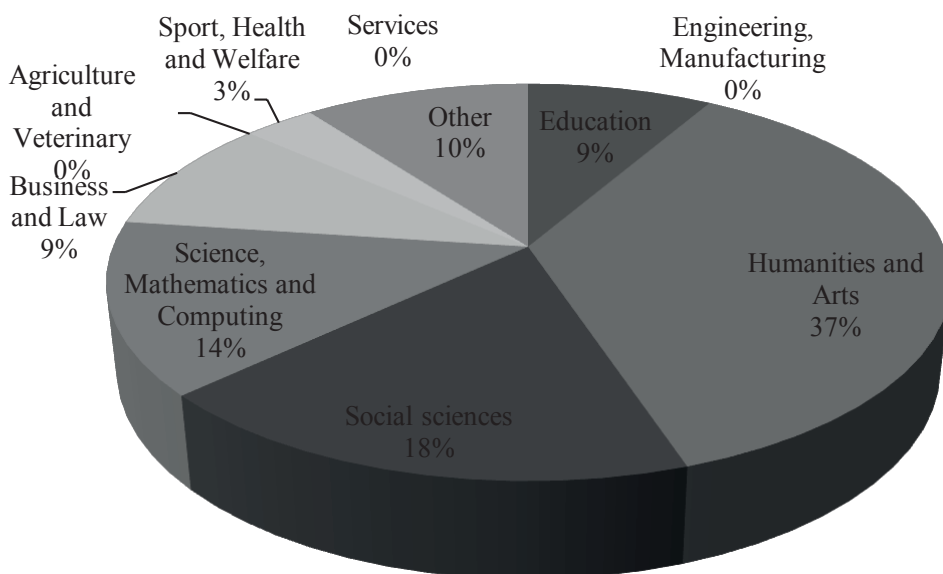


Figure 4.2. MERGE participants by the field of study  
Source: Al-Hamarnah and Schubert 2013

#### 4.3.2. The participants’ study abroad mobility patterns

Of the 148 participants of the case study, 81% studied abroad once, almost 17% of our participants went abroad for a second time and only 2% took part in a third study-abroad period. It seems that some of the participants also included internships or work-and-travel experiences in these study-abroad periods. As the majority of the participants were students of the old-degree system (76%),

almost 84% of the participants went abroad during their Magister (54), Diplom (45) or Staatsexamen degrees (Teachers, Lawyers or Medicine: 15). Of the 36 participants whose degrees fit into the new degree framework, 36% went abroad during their Bachelor's, 39% during their Master's and 25% at the doctoral level. On average, students went to study abroad for the first time in Semester 6. Students who went abroad for a second time, on average, left in semester eight. A possible third study abroad period, on average, took place in semester 11 (this question had only 6 valid responses, though). It showed that the majority of the participants had some experience living in countries other than their native country. Of 148 participants, about 44% had lived already in two countries, and about 44% had lived in three or more countries. About 11% had only lived in one country so far. At the time of the survey, 47% of the participants had spent one year or less abroad, about 52% had lived abroad for at least 2 years (of those 52%, about 22% more than three years) (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 3–24).

During study period 1, almost 62% of the students went abroad for one semester, 34% a year or more. 44% of the study period 2 students went abroad for one semester, 9% for a year and 19% for more than a year (median length of stay of these six students: 12 months). Furthermore, during the second stay (32 valid responses), 44% went abroad for one semester, 28% of the students went abroad for less than a semester, and 19% participants went abroad for more than a year (median length of stay of these six students: 36 months).

The most used languages during their Erasmus stays abroad for Erasmus students from Mainz are English (about 50% of the participants used), French (about 30%), Spanish (about 19%), German (about 14%), and Italian (about 9%). It should be emphasized that this does not mean that 50% of all the participants went to English-speaking countries but that English is a *lingua franca* which was also used by students in non-English speaking countries. The same statement, to a lesser degree, is true for French and Spanish (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 9, 21).

Of the 148 participants, 23.8% had spent their first study abroad period in France, 17.0% in Spain and 16.3% in the United Kingdom (Fig. 4.3). Following countries are Italy (8.2%), Sweden (4.1%) and Poland and Austria (each 3.4%). Similar to the top student receiving countries in Europe, the top student-receiving countries of German students in 2010-11 were Spain (30,580), France (23,173), the United Kingdom (17,504) and Italy (16,737). It can be stated that participants' choice of study abroad countries is not that surprising. Only the top two positions of France and Spain are interchanged. And this fact could, possibly, be explained with the Dijon bilateral agreement scholarship that (in the last three semesters) made up shares of 6–10% of all Erasmus students.

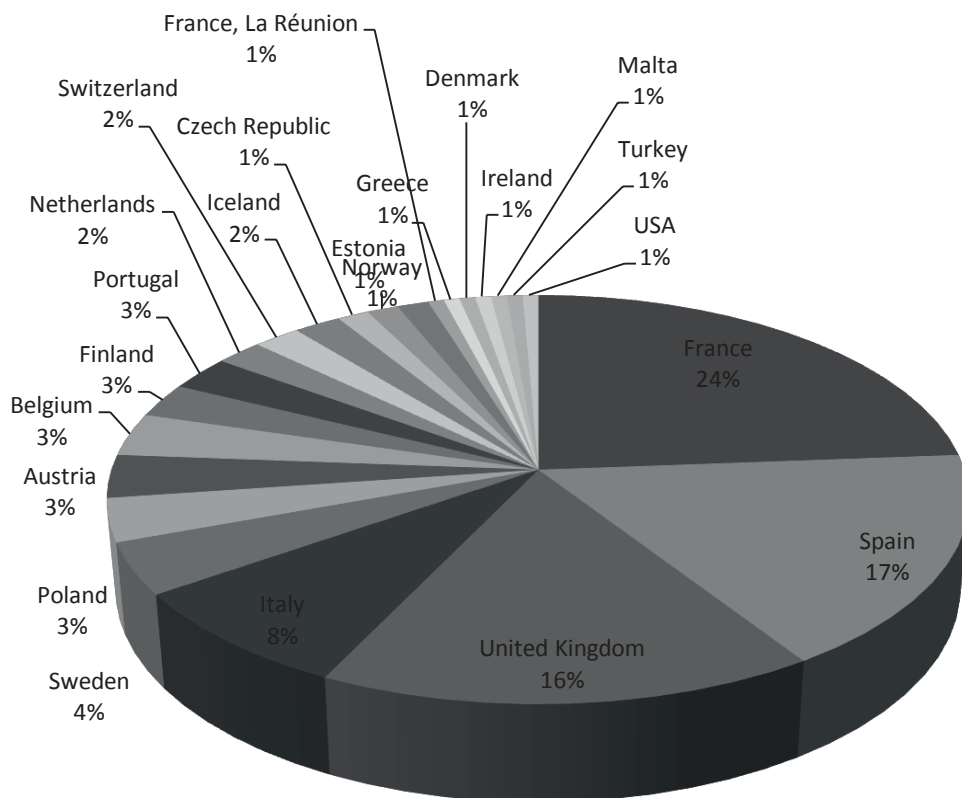


Figure 4.3. Host countries of students from Mainz  
Source: Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013

The Erasmus coordinators of the international office of the JGU stated that the exchanges to Dijon and Valencia were the ones with the highest shares, with about 50 students per semester, of outgoing Erasmus students from Mainz. For the 36 students who studied abroad for a second time, the UK, France, and Spain (13.9%, 11.1% and 11.1% of the 36) remained the most popular countries (Fig. 4.4). In addition, 13.9% spent their second study abroad period in Switzerland. For their second study abroad period some study participants also named countries which are not part of the Erasmus Programme: 9 students (or 25%) of the total 36 went to a non-European country to study abroad. Of the 9 case study participants who went to study abroad for a third time, 3 went to Spain (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 5–6, 20–21).

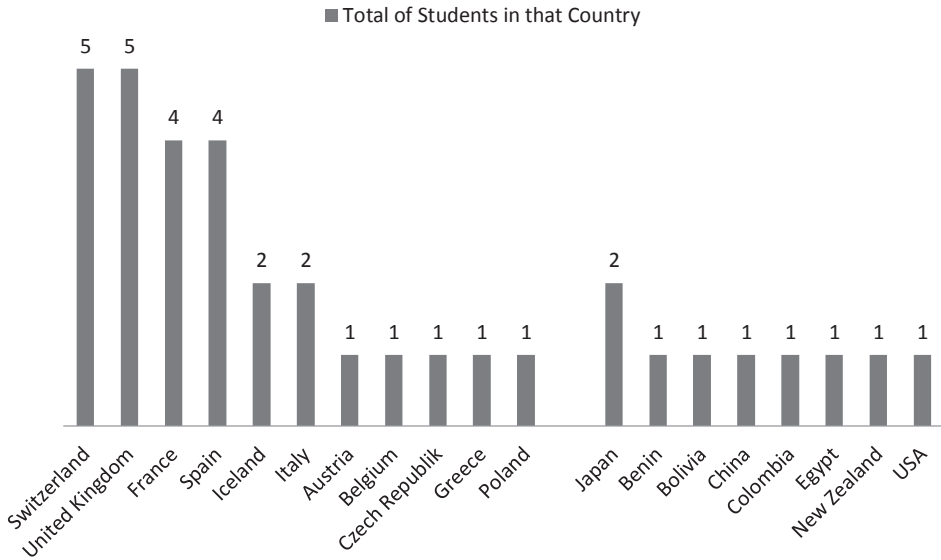


Figure 4.4. Host countries of MERGE JGU case study participants  
Source: (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013)

### 4.3.3. The participants' assessment of their study abroad period(s) and the decision-making to study abroad

Most of the 148 participants claimed that their overall experience was satisfactory and also found the impact on their mobility satisfactory (on average). On average, participants were content with the utility of their study abroad experiences in finding a job as well its utility in acquiring learning skills. About 90% of all the survey participants would definitely recommend the participation in international student mobility to their friends (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 22–23). When being asked what the most positive element of the participant's student mobility was, 33% (of 88 responses) chose intercultural aspects, 26% international friendships and 16% language skills. Organizational aspects (25%), the 'Erasmus-bubble effect' (the effect that Erasmus students just hang out with each other and do not get to know locals) (17%), credit recognition (9%) and the quality of studies (8%) were among the least positive aspects of the participant's student mobility (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 23).

When assessing the importance of factors in the decision-making to study abroad (Tab. 4.3), the most important reasons (in that order) to participate in the Erasmus Programme are "to gain new experiences", "to acquire practi-

cal foreign language skills”, “to get to know a new culture”, “to visit more parts of the world”, and “to live abroad” as well as “to make international friends” and “because of the destination country”. All of these reasons are seen as very important or at least as important reasons to study abroad. Reasons which seem to play a declining role are “recommendations from other students”, “the reputation of the host-university” or “recommendations from university staff”. On average, participants rated the factor “to have some fun” with 4.5 (7 very important – 1 not important); hence, deeming it as moderately important. This might be surprising as the Erasmus programme often has the image of a ‘fun holiday’. Of those 34 who listed other reasons for studying abroad, academic decisions, relationships, interest in intercultural exchange and friends and family were the most popular answers (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 12, 22).

Table 4.3. MERGE case study participants’ decision-making to study abroad

Why did you decide to study abroad? (147 Responses) Please assess the importance of the following factors (7 very important – 1 not important)	
Average	Reason
6.7	To gain new experiences
6.3	To acquire practical foreign language skills
6.2	To get to know a new culture
5.9	To visit more parts of the world
5.7	To live abroad
5.6	To make international friends
5.5	Because of the destination country
4.8	To have better career prospects
4.7	To broaden my academic knowledge
4.7	To become more independent
4.5	To have some fun
4.4	Because of the destination city
4.0	Because of the study programme
3.2	Because of recommendations from other students
3.1	Because of the reputation of my host university
2.7	Because of recommendations from university staff

Source: Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013.



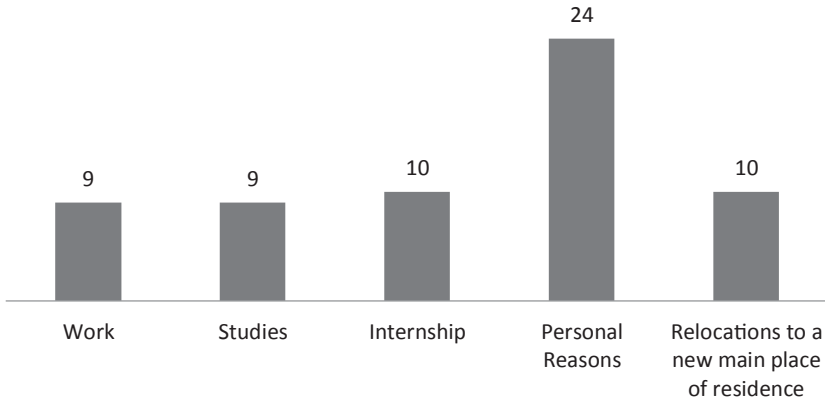


Figure 4.5. MERGE case study participants who extended their Erasmus stays (absolute numbers)  
Source: (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013)

#### 4.3.4. The participants' mobility patterns after the end of their Erasmus semesters

For 27% of the participants, the Erasmus period led to a longer stay in the host country than expected (Fig. 4.5). In 38% (total 24) of all these cases, the extended stay was due to personal reasons, 16% (10) stayed for an internship, and 16% (10) relocated to a new main place of residence. About 60% of all participants returned to the cities where they had studied within Erasmus between 1-6 times, 15% had not returned to their Erasmus destination cities. About 24% returned for more than 6 times, in some cases they even stayed permanently. On average, the participants returned to their Erasmus stay cities about seven times. About 86% of the participants claim that they are still in touch with friends from their Erasmus periods (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 24, 33–34).

Of the 148 participants, about 18% (27 people) were currently living abroad when the survey was held. When asked why the participants decided to live abroad, language skills (5.3), career opportunities (5.1), international experience and networks (5.1), the possibility to live in an intercultural environment (5.1) as well as partners or family (4.8) were considered important reasons (7 very important – 1 not important). Less important were friends, climate, and the costs of living. Of the 27 participants who were currently living abroad, five participants stated that specific job offers influenced their decisions to migrate. Of those students who decided to remain in Germany (about 82% of the participants), the most important reasons to stay were to continue one's studies (5.9), partner/family (5.4), friends (5.0), career opportunities (4.7). Lack of language skills (2.1), the climate (1.9), or dissatisfaction with one's student mobility (1.2), do not really seem to play

a role in the decision-making. Specific job offers, as well as the general assumption that the German job market would be more interesting, are other reasons why participants preferred to stay in Germany (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 33, 48).

About 39% of all the survey participants assessed the likelihood to live abroad the following year as moderate to very high, 60% stated that the chances were rather low or impossible. Nevertheless, more than one third of all participants are willing to move abroad within the next year; this seems like quite a high number and might indicate a high mobility among participants (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 33).

#### **4.3.5. Participants' perception of Europe and political and social commitment**

85% of the ex-Erasmus graduates stated that Erasmus has had a positive impact on their opinion about Europe (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 33). In addition, the participants of the survey assessed the statement that they felt more European after their study abroad periods with 5.2 (on a scale from 7 totally agree – 1 totally disagree) (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 22). On a scale from 7 (I totally agree) to 1 (I totally disagree), the 148 participants agreed with 6.5 on the statement that after the Erasmus stay they had come to a better understanding of their host country.

25% of 148 students were involved in student clubs and associations, of those 25% almost 70% participated in various student clubs while nobody engaged in students' union executive committees. About 68% of 148 students were involved in extra-curricular activities (about 30% in sports, about 2% in politics, about 40% in cultural clubs and about 22% in social clubs). Of the 100 students who were involved in extra-curricular activities, the involvement of about 40% in cultural clubs, and of about 22% in social clubs seem quite high. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that we do not know how regular the involvement in the specified activities was (Al-Hamarneh and Schubert 2013: 21–22).

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

The mobility patterns of Erasmus student exchange mobility at the JGU are typical German Erasmus mobility patterns. At the JGU, almost 71% of the Erasmus students are female, for every male student there are per ratio 2.4 female students. France, Spain, the UK, Italy and Sweden are the countries which receive most JGU students (in that order). That there are more students who are going to France than Spain is unusual in German Erasmus statistics. This can probably be explained by the bilateral agreement with the University of Dijon

and the Dijon scholarship, and also the fact that French is a popular study subject at the JGU, as well as a popular German high school language. Countries which have recently been receiving more JGU students are primarily Poland, Austria, Norway, Portugal as well as Turkey.

Especially recently, there seems to be a growing demand for exchange to Poland, for example the economics department of Mainz has established a successful partnership with the Warsaw School of Economics. Both, the impact and share of countries such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia is really low for Erasmus students from JGU. In most of these Erasmus countries, there have been problems to fill all Erasmus student exchange spots. The Erasmus coordinators of the JGU international office summarized that sunny countries and countries whose languages are taught in German schools are the most popular Erasmus destination countries for JGU students (Schubert 2013: 105).

It is interesting that of the 148 participants of the case study, 81% studied abroad once and about 17% of the participants went abroad for a second time. The JGU Erasmus coordinators affirmed that many ex-Erasmus students are highly interested in further mobility, at least in an internship abroad. Some study participants who went abroad for a second time went to non-European countries: 9 students (or 25%) of the total 36 who studied abroad for a second time went to a non-European country. In the MERGE case study, 27% of the participants reported that the Erasmus period led to a longer stay in the host country than expected. In 38% (total 24) of all these cases the extended stay was due to personal reasons, 16% (10) stayed for an internship and 16% (10) relocated to a new main place of residence.

About 39% of all the MERGE survey participants assessed the likelihood to live abroad the next year as moderate to very high, 60% stated that the chances were rather low or impossible. Nevertheless, more than one third of all participants are willing to move abroad within the next year; this seems like quite a high number and might indicate a high mobility among participants. In the qualitative interviews with ex-Erasmus graduates from Mainz, there were two groups: the ex-Erasmus students who actually migrated to a different country after they graduated and then there were ex-Erasmus students who showed a general interest in mobility and would consider migrating to a different country. Of those interviewees who actually migrated, friends or partners were the primary reasons for the ex-Erasmus graduate's migration. A job offer or the hope for a job offer in a different country were also quite important; and again Erasmus connections also factored into the decision-making. Clearly, these cases cannot be representative, but in general it can be stated that the Erasmus programme seems to offer a framework which promotes mobility. Both, the results from the MERGE survey as well as the statements of the qualitative interview participants indicate that Erasmus mobility increases the ex-Erasmus students' interest and willingness in mobility.

## Chapter 5

### THE UK CASE STUDY OF THE MERGE PROJECT

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The internationalisation of higher education in the UK has developed increasing importance since the 1990s, as shown by the ‘Prime Minister’s Initiative on International Education’, first launched in 1999 (1999–2004) and secondly in 2006 (2006–2011). These initiatives looked at both incoming and outgoing students and HEI staff, by financing UK leads in international education, funding developments to attract international students, but also recognising that UK students could benefit from a period abroad. These forms of internationalisation are increasingly recognised and studied by researchers such as Brooks and Waters (2009: 193), who stated that ‘a period of study abroad can offer important benefits to both the individual and wider society through the acquisition of a more cosmopolitan outlook and the development of inter-cultural skills’.

At the same time, however, the UK Government made clear its intention to introduce measures to reduce net migration to the UK from, in their words, ‘hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands’, and also identified the student visa regime as one area which required further consideration as a means of illicit or illegal migration. In the introduction to the Home Office report on The Student Immigration System (2010), the UK Home Secretary argued that they “expect the student route to make its contribution to reducing net migration” and that “we want to make clear that the student route is a temporary one, and on completion of their studies, students will be expected to return to their countries of origin” (p. 6). This approach follows the previous government’s introduction, in 2009, of the Points Based System for new migrants and new, tighter procedures for issuing student visas. At the same time however, the Government has acknowledged the importance of attracting the world’s best students, and the contribution international students make to the higher education sector and to the wider economy in general. An independent report conducted by Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

in February 2011, questioned the extent to which the ‘student route’ actually contributes to net migration, and raised concerns that the proposed measures to tackle perceived abuses in the system may risk damaging legitimate student recruitment, and have a negative impact upon the economy. The report concluded that: “The government’s proposal to make student migration more temporary and short-term seems to be based on weak evidence. Relatively few international students stay in the UK in the long term, and there is little evidence to suggest that those who do have a negative impact on the labour market or the wider economy” (Mulley and Sachrajda 2011: 24). Of course, on the surface at least, this debate relates only to student immigration from outside of the European Economic Area, and not to EU students, but logically, this is only because the Government is unable to restrict EU student migration under its EU Treaty obligations (European Parliament and Council Directive 2004/38/EC of 29 April 2004). Notwithstanding this, the arguments about the contribution the ‘student route’ might make to net migration, and the debate about the benefits that such migration can bring to local economies and local employers would appear to be equally relevant.

In this chapter, we examine the UK’s ERASMUS student mobility against this policy context. Following a review of previous academic research pertaining to UK student mobility nationally and internationally, we examine data collected from both a quantitative survey of former ERASMUS students from Leeds Metropolitan University and qualitative data from student advisors from Leeds Metropolitan University. We conclude that the ambivalences of the UK government towards student mobility is also manifested in the UK students themselves towards ERASMUS mobility opportunities as obstacles to mobility, including the operation of the UK housing market largely prevent a fuller engagement. Nevertheless those students that do undertake ERASMUS mobility identify positive experiences and positive tendencies towards enhanced employability.

## 5.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It has long been the tradition within the UK that students moving into higher education leave the region of their parental home and study at a higher education institution (HEI) elsewhere. However in recent years there has been evidence of a shift to more UK students studying locally, nevertheless, there is still significant numbers of students choosing HEI’s in other regions of the UK (Belfield and Morris 1999; Holdsworth 2009; Patiniotos and Holdsworth 2005). This form of localism versus migration has strengthened and increased the two-tier system within HEI’s (Smith 2009; Holdsworth 2009; Munro et al. 2009) between “the ‘affluent movers’ and the ‘disadvantaged stayers’” (Smith 2009: 1801).

Although successive governments and individual universities have sought to remove the barriers to student mobility and it is apparent that many students still wish to study away from their region of origin, “it is also apparent that financial

considerations will be the number one factor limiting student mobility” (Bhandari and Laughlin 2009: ix). This issue was also identified by Morris et al. (2008: i), who concluded that students were worried about their levels of debt and how they were going to make the repayments. However, there are financial costs and benefits to both moving and staying local to attend a HEI: “some individuals will be ‘forced’ to move (the benefits of study in their own region being low) and others will be ‘forced’ to stay (the costs of study in another region being high)” (Belfield and Morris 1999: 255), which, when looked at from the other viewpoint, become benefits to the individual: i.e., if the cost of study is too high elsewhere, then it is intrinsically beneficial to stay.

There are many incentives to studying at a HEI away from home. However, many researchers argue that these incentives are merely perceived (Holdsworth 2009; Wächter 2009; Belfield and Morris 1999; Bhandari and Blumenthal 2009). Despite this, Holdsworth (2009: 1862) has argued that, “whether or not students actually benefit from moving away in the ways that are popularly portrayed, the fact that these assumptions are so credible means that students who move away can rely on promoting personal qualities that are assumed to derive from their particular mobility experiences”.

Popular discourse about going to university epitomises the preconceived notion that all students have a choice of which HEI they wish to attend, with university promotional material being a significant source of incentive: “University prospectuses promote their locality as well as the institution, thus incorporating the assumption that mobile undergraduates have a choice about location” and “as such, the experiences of students taking different paths to university, which do not involve mobility, are excluded from popular images of going to university” (Holdsworth 2009: 1849).

Indeed, Duke-Williams (2009: 1827) argues that “students who remain at their parental home during the course of their studies may have different future mobility propensities to those who have moved away from home”. Due to the increased financial burden of studying, more and more students are having to undertake paid employment with “more than half ... working more than the guideline set by most universities of 15 hours a week”, and unsurprisingly, “students from poorer backgrounds are much more likely to work than are those from middle-class households” (Munro et al. 2009: 1815). Therefore, local students are doubly disadvantaged than their more mobile counterparts.

Historically, students in the UK have been a very mobile section of society (Duke-Williams 2009: 1826–1827). Be it emigrating to another country for an entire course, a shorter period abroad as a segment of their studies, a gap year travelling or working abroad, studying within a different region within their own country or studying locally within their country of origin and having to tackle the daily mobilities this entails, all add to the growing complexities of student life (Duke-Williams 2009; Bhandari and Laughlin 2009; van der Wende 2003; Holdsworth 2009; Belfield and Morris 1999).

Moreover, from a wider mobilities perspective, Holdsworth (2009: 1852) adds that “[s]tudents are constantly on the move: between halls; from place of residence (which may be halls of residence, privately rented accommodation, or parental home) to campus; as well as from ‘home’ to university”. She goes on to argue that ‘local students’ mobility patterns can often much more extreme than those who move region or country and that these local mobilities are often trivialised by policy makers who state that “going to HE [Higher Education] was ... the same as going to school or college, all that was different was that they caught a different bus” (Holdsworth 2009: 1860). As universities are becoming more diversified in their student population, many first generation students from disadvantaged backgrounds are beginning to attend HE. Their “daily mobility of travelling to university represents a more radical displacement than students travelling daily from ‘studentland’ or halls of residence, (or moving on a termly basis between ‘home’ and university)” (Holdsworth, 2009: 1860).

After graduating from university, meanwhile, students who are not returning to HE for a higher level degree often face a number of options including, returning to their ‘home’ town or country (if they moved in the first place), staying in the locality where they studied, or moving to find an altogether new location (Duke-Williams 2009: 1826). From those students who had previously not moved to study, approximately one quarter of them move region to find work upon graduation (Duke-Williams 2009). This can be a significant problem for regions of the UK outside the wealthier south of England (Holdsworth 2009). In their earlier research, Belfield and Morris (1999) concluded that around one half of the students who move region to attend a HEI remain there post-graduation to find employment and thus increasing the skills quotient and within the region, however, looking at this from the other perspective, the region is also losing one half of these students too. In addition, most EU students who choose to stay within a UK region partake in further higher education rather than going straight into employment (Morris et al. 2008).

In recent years, “international forms of education have come to assume an increasingly important place within UK HE policy” (Brooks and Waters 2009: 192). This has taken two forms. On the one hand, more international students have been recruited to study at UK HEI’s. On the other hand, UK HEI’s have been active in developing courses and franchises in other parts of the world where markets have opened for universities to take advantage of these opportunities with the support and encouragement of their governments who recognise the economic benefits of doing so. Thus as well as the migration of the individual to undertake studies, there is also the mobility of the course to the individual in their home country, home region, or even their actual home through online media, wherever that may be in the world. Within the EU, there are many distance learning opportunities (such as the Open University in the UK and UNED, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia in Spain), which are offering a range of Uni-

versity degrees to those who might have struggled to access or attend a university for a variety of reasons. Due to the growing worldwide demand for higher education, many countries cannot meet these demands, and as such this “creates market opportunities ... which are actively explored by providers in mostly Western countries” (van der Wende 2003: 194) with many universities “starting to develop branch campuses abroad, so that they can reach billions of students who cannot afford to study abroad but who desire access to international education” (Bhandari and Blumenthal 2009: 12). The exportation of higher education has been identified “as a promising economic activity and an important source of additional income”, which many governments, including the UK, have stimulated their universities to pursue further. Countries such as Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are increasingly importing ‘well-established institutions [from] countries that attract a large number of international students ... to aid in improving the host government’s education-related reputation and signalling to the world that it is modernizing its economy and its desire to be a regional education hub’ (Lane 2011: 367).

Jane Knight (2010) explains that in many countries that are undergoing economic transition, the demand for higher education is increasing due to changing demographics, the shift to lifelong learning, the growth of the knowledge economy and the need for highly skilled workers. While this demand is increasing, the ability of local public higher education providers to supply this education is limited due to resource constraints and is being increasingly satisfied by the incoming International Branch Campuses (IBC’s) to the extent that it is estimated that by 2025, there will be 7.2 million international students studying at IBC’s (Bohm et al. 2002). However, not all IBC’s have been successful and a number of major universities have had to withdraw from significant overseas investments. Nevertheless, there has been a shift away from encouraging student mobility, towards programme and provider mobility as well as the increasing use of new technologies to create ‘virtual’ campuses. Despite these advancements in teaching methods into foreign market places, it is argued “[t]hey can never fully replace the kind of intense cultural learning experience of plunging into a foreign environment and mastering the linguistic and cultural and academic challenges of studying”, and as such it has been recognised that there is, “an important role for both kinds of ‘international education’ ” (Bhandari and Blumenthal 2009: 12).

From the EHEA perspective, mobility is widely being perceived ‘in terms of a voluntary decision, of a horizontal basis and of cultural, social and economic enhancement both for the individual and for society’ (Teichler and Jahr 2001: 444). Studies have demonstrated that students who have benefited from the Erasmus programme are more likely to move after their studies (Teichler 1996) and highlights a rapid expansion in measures of formal standardization for facilitating recognition of academic mobility (Teichler 2004). In terms of the consequences of the Erasmus grant on future mobility and job prospects, it has also been argued that the experience



brings the opportunity of gaining better skills, both study-related and interpersonal related skills (Teichler 1996; Bracht et al. 2006). Bracht et al. (2006: 16) argue that: “university leaders rate the former ERASMUS students’ career opportunities most favourably, and most of them expect that their career advantage will increase in the future. Four fifth[s] believe that a study abroad often increases the chance of getting a reasonable job. More than half expect that ERASMUS students more often than non-mobile students get a position appropriate to their level of educational attainment, and one quarter that ERASMUS has a more positive impact on the employability of graduates than any other type of study abroad.”

However, it has not been clear what the impact of Erasmus has had on their later careers. If you do an Erasmus exchange, it is widely assumed that you become more European, gain more mobility capital and become more employable. But whether this is actually true has yet to be really verified: ‘academics, students, and parents take mobility for granted rather than question the validity of the assumption on which it is based’ (Holdsworth 2009: 1861). The identification of whether Erasmus has really enhanced the employability of the students after Erasmus has become a priority in the current economic climate of Europe. From a mobilities theoretical perspective, while ‘brain drain’ and ‘brain gain’ are well-known concepts, research is showing a more complex picture (Rivza and Teichler 2007). Some students and researchers are increasingly interested in earning multiple degrees in multiple countries, before perhaps returning to their home countries after 8 to 12 years of international study and work experience; hence, the emergence of the mobility terms ‘brain train’ and ‘brain circulation’. These concepts present benefits, risks and new challenges for both sending and receiving countries (Knight 2011a: 237).

### 5.3. ERASMUS MOBILITY IN THE UK

This section shows the Erasmus mobility in the UK, highlighting the mobility at Leeds Metropolitan University, because of its involvement in MERGE case studies. Since Erasmus began in 1987-1988, the programme has provided 2.3 million European students in higher education with the opportunity of study or train in other EU country. It was in 2009/10 when the boundary of 2 million students was reached (European Commission 2011b). However, by 2014, the EU commission has achieved the 3 million student mobility target (European Commission 2013a).

The latest data from the European Commission show that Spain is the most popular country in terms of both destination and origin of students (European Commission 2011b). The top countries sending students within the Erasmus programme are Spain (sent 31,158 students, taking over the top of the ranking from France), followed by France, Germany, Italy and Poland. The picture is quite similar in terms of destinations, which is Spain (receiving 35,386 students), fol-

lowed by France, the United Kingdom (UK), Germany and Italy. The main difference is the place of the UK, which although it does not have a significant ranking in terms of outgoing students, it does constitute the third main receiving country.

In 2011/12, the most popular destinations for Erasmus students from the United Kingdom “were France (4,284–31.3%); Spain (3,229–23.6%); Germany (2,007–14.7%); Italy (948–7%); and the Netherlands (582–4.25%)” (British Council 2014). In addition, there are “notable proportional increases to Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Iceland, and well over 100 students who have been able to benefit from Switzerland’s inclusion in the Erasmus programme” (British Council 2014). In the UK, Erasmus placements also play an increasingly significant role. The British Council (2014) states that in “2011/12 there were 4,568 outgoing student work placement mobilities” and that the “UK ranked fourth for the number of students who went on a work placement and was the most popular destination for incoming Erasmus work placement students”.

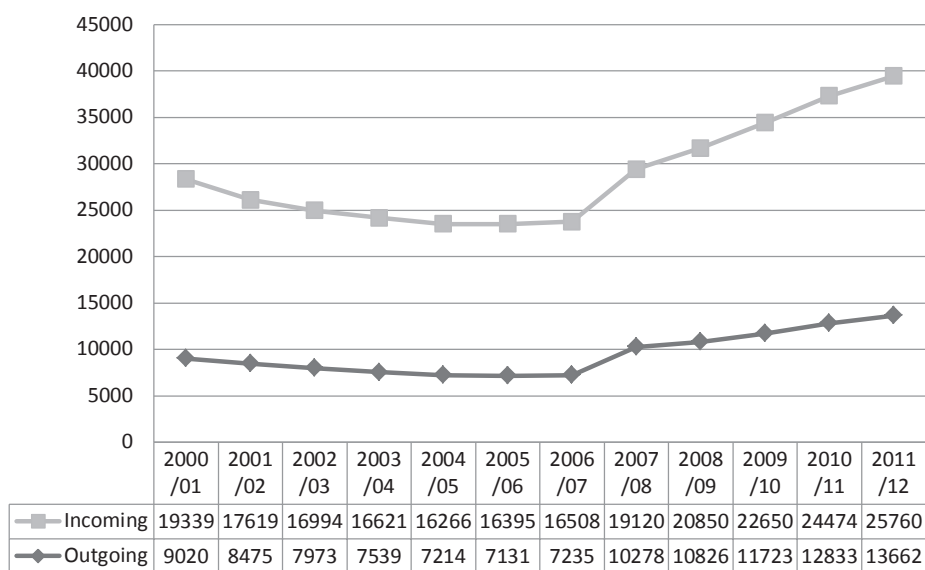


Figure 5.1. Erasmus mobility between 2004–2012 in the UK

Source: created from British Council statistics

At the national level, although UK universities follow the policy of ‘1 out in’ student, in practice this ratio is overall 1 outgoing to 2 incoming (Fig. 5.1). In terms of changes in the last decade, the Erasmus outgoing number has increased by 157%, with a total of 11,724 Erasmus students recorded in the 2009/10 academic year (British Council). Thus, although the relation between outgoing and incoming students is not balanced currently, the trend shows an increase in both cases, 50.17% in the case of outgoing and 29.47% in the case of incomings.

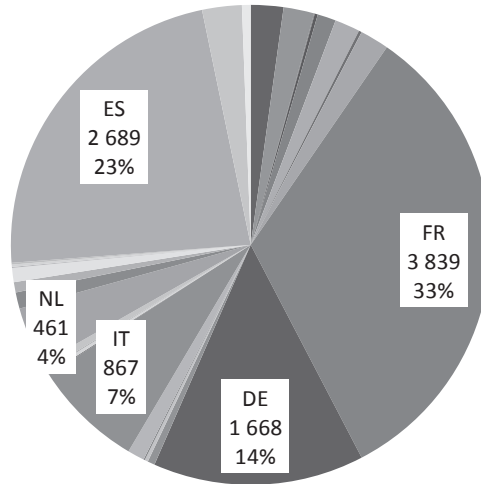


Figure 5.2. Erasmus destination countries – students from UK HE institutions (2009/2010)  
Source: British Council

Data gathered by the British Council show that for outgoing UK Erasmus students, France is the most popular destination, constituting the country of destination of almost 33% of the students. Spain constitutes the second destination country, with almost 23% (which contradicts the general picture of ERASMUS mobility, Spain followed by France), followed by Germany, Italy and Netherlands (Fig. 5.2).

In terms of subject areas, Erasmus mobility in the UK is led mainly by language and philological sciences, which constitute more than the half of total Erasmus students (3,079 out of 7,437 study mobilities and 2,161 out of 3,406 work placements in the study period 2008/2009). Language and philology is the subject which, not surprisingly, sent most students abroad. This is followed (although not closely) by business studies and management sciences (977 students in 2008/2009), law (705), social sciences (700) and art and design (517). The geographical distribution shows that London is one of the most popular destinations for EU students who choose UK as an Erasmus destination, ahead of other locations, such as Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield.

#### 5.4. LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY (LMU) ERASMUS STATISTICAL DATA

At the Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU), the top 6 destination countries within the EU are Spain (a total of 220 students during academic years 2006/07-2013/14), France (180), Germany (61), Czech Republic (24), Finland (21) and the Netherlands (21). From the academic year 2007/08, these numbers also include work placements and language assistances.

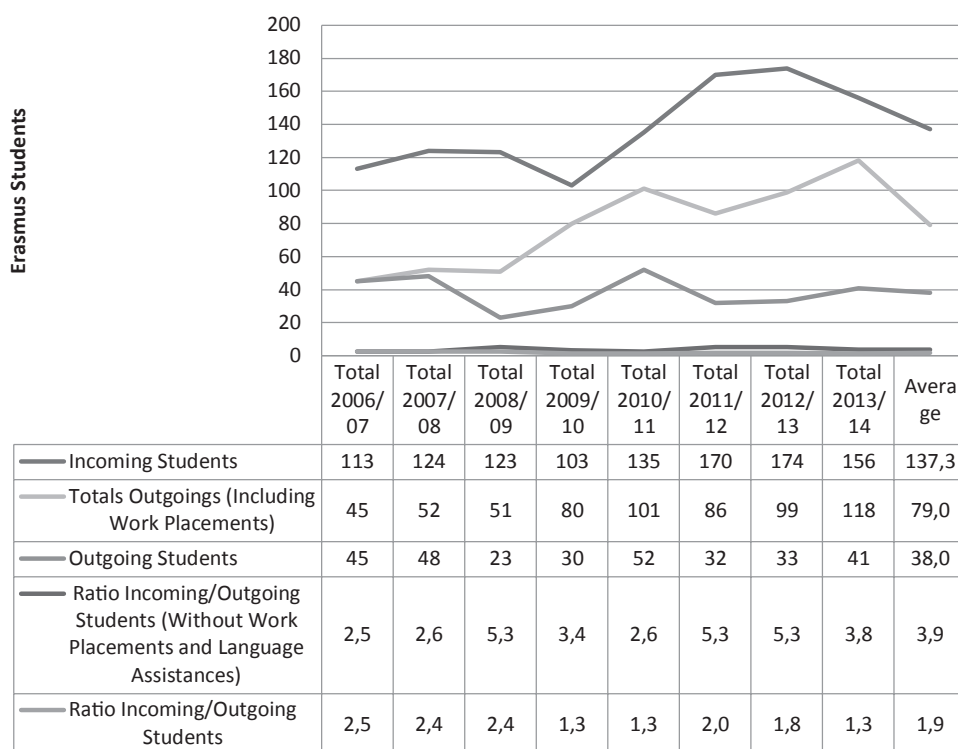


Figure 5.3. Ratios of incoming to outgoing students at the Leeds Metropolitan University, 2006–2014  
Source: Leeds Metropolitan International Office 2014

The top 6 incoming Erasmus student nations at LMU are France, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic. When looking at the ratio of incoming and outgoing students at LMU (Fig. 5.3), it can be stated that in the time-frame from academic year 2006/07 until academic year 2013/14, on average, there were almost 4 students per each incoming Erasmus student (this excludes work placements and language assistances). When including work placements and language assistances, the average of the ratio is about 2 outgoing students per incoming student.

The university has a total of about 137 Erasmus agreements as of February 2014. At the university, there are 18 different Erasmus programme coordinators and in the academic year 2011/12, the total Erasmus budget of LMU was 289,377 €. In 2008/09, the budget had been 193,838 €.

Per year, on average, 79 LMU students went abroad with the Erasmus programme (based on data collected from 2006 until 2014). Of those 79, on average, 38 studied abroad while about 41 students took part in work placements or language assistances abroad. The most popular destinations for Erasmus students from LMU are Spain, France, Germany, Czech Republic, Finland,

the Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey, Denmark as well as Ireland. From academic year 2012/13 to 2013/14, there was a significant increase in the number of students going to France (increased from 22 to 47) (Fig. 5.4) and Turkey (increased from 2 to 14) possibly due to increasing numbers of students from these countries seeking an Erasmus experience ‘back home’.

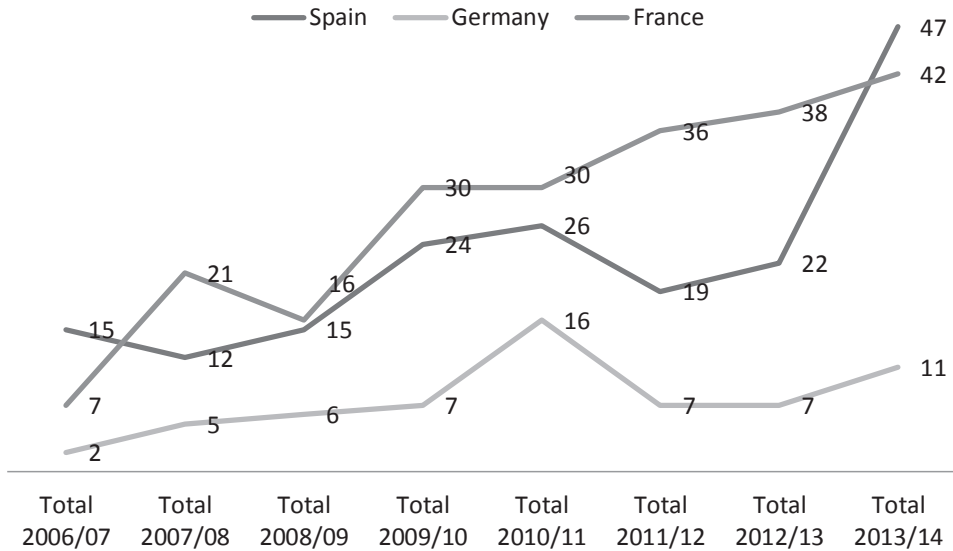


Figure 5.4. Top 3 Erasmus destinations for Leeds Metropolitan University students  
 Source: Leeds Metropolitan International Office 2014

In general, it can be stated that, within the last eight years, the total of Erasmus student outgoings from LMU has been constantly growing in most country cases. In the last eight academic years, the number of Erasmus outgoings surpassed the total of a hundred twice: in 2010/11 (101) and in 2013/14 (118). While the numbers of students partaking in student mobility have been inconsistent (but definitely not growing), the number of students that take part in work placements and language assistances has been increasing consistently.

On average, there were almost 2 female students per each male Erasmus outgoing student in the timeframe of 2006/07–2013/14.

In terms of incoming student at Leeds Metropolitan University, France (total of 170), Spain (132), the Netherlands (121), Germany (113), Poland (80), the Czech Republic (79), Finland (65), Norway (50), Sweden (42) and Belgium (38) are the countries which had most students coming to LMU during the last eight years. During the last four years (academic years 2010/11-2013/14), there were also a significant number of Turkish students per academic year (a median of 6.5).

## 5.5. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY EXPERIENCES

Although there were only 16 participants that took part in the MERGE case study at LMU, this reflected the relatively small outgoing student ERASMUS population. Of the 16 participants, there was one person who did not study abroad at all; the others participated in student mobility.

About 86% of the participants studied abroad only once, just 2 people studied abroad more than 3 times (it should be stated that it is not clear whether the participants also included experiences abroad which were not for pure study purposes).

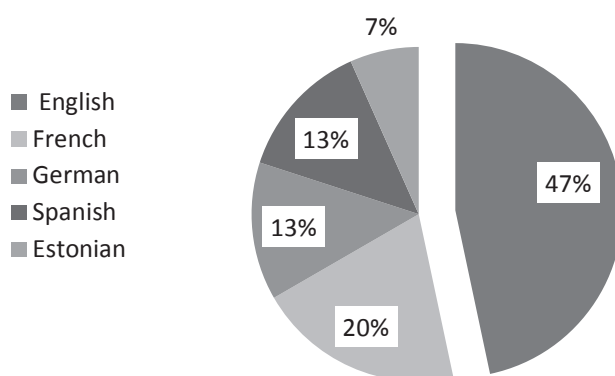


Figure 5.5. Language of studies abroad

Source: own research

Of the 14 participants who actually took part in Erasmus mobility, 5 went to the United Kingdom. This surprising result could show that previous Erasmus students actually end up moving to the UK. 3 participants went to France, 2 participants each went to Spain and Germany and one participant each went to the Netherlands and Estonia. About 60% of the ex-Erasmus students at LMU went to study abroad for one year. It has to be added that about 47% of the students studied in English while they were in other countries. French (20%) as well as German and Spanish (13% each) were other main languages while studying abroad (Fig. 5.5).

When students were asked to assess a number of factors why they had decided to study abroad, “to acquire practical foreign language skills” (6.4), “to gain new experiences” (6.1) and “to live abroad” (6.1) were assessed as the most important reasons (on a scale where 7 is ‘very important’ and 1 is ‘not important’). “Because of the destination city” (4.4), “because of recommendations from university staff” (4.1), “because of the reputation of my host university” (4.1) and “because of recommendations from other students” (3.7) were seen as the least important reasons to study abroad.

On a scale in which 7 means that participants totally agree with the statement and 1 means that they totally disagree, the participants were asked how much their study abroad period affected the following factors. The ex-Erasmus students asserted that they improved the language skills of the destination country (6.6), that they became more self-confident (6.0) as well as independent (6.0) and that they made friends with local people (6.0).

Table 5.1. Self-evaluation of the study period abroad

6.4	Regarding your overall satisfaction
5.9	Regarding its impact on your mobility
5.0	Regarding its utility in finding a job
4.7	Regarding its utility in acquiring learning skills

Source: own research.

Of the 15 participants who studied abroad, on a scale in which 7 meant satisfactory and 1 unsatisfactory, the participants assessed their satisfaction with their experience abroad overall at 6.4 (Tab. 5.1). Fourteen participants would definitely recommend participation in international student mobility to their friends, and for 40% of the participants, the Erasmus period led to a longer stay in their host country. Their stays were extended due to work (3), studies (2), internship (3), and personal reasons (1).

93.3% of the survey participants confirmed that Erasmus exchange had a positive impact on their opinion about Europe. About 53% of the participants returned to their Erasmus destination countries between 1-6 times. About 40% of the participants returned to their Erasmus exchange countries between 7 to 12 or even more times.

When asked whether participants still keep in touch with friends they made during their time of student mobility, 80% answered “yes”. Social networking communication seems to be the dominant medium for this communication (4.0), followed by emails (2.8) and phone calls (1.8) (on a scale with 7 as the most often used medium).

One of the surprises of the quantitative results from the MERGE survey at LMU was that of the 14 participants who took part in Erasmus mobility five went to the United Kingdom during their first Erasmus experience. With a closer look at the data from these cases it could be assessed that these students had done their undergraduate studies in other countries and came to the UK for graduate studies. So their first study abroad experience could be seen as an advertisement for further study in the UK. 47% of the students who took part in Erasmus student mobility studied in English, therefore not necessarily having to learn a new language.

It seems that the students who actually participated in Erasmus student mobility were quite happy with the results. For example, participants assessed their satisfaction with their experience abroad overall at 6.4. 60% of the participants had lived in two countries, 20% in more than two countries. These results show that ex-Erasmus students from LMU are not very likely to move abroad just due to Erasmus student exchange.

With the MERGE project's focus on the impact on social networks of the Erasmus exchange, it should be noted that Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter seem to be the most important networks for ex-Erasmus students of LMU. Moreover, in terms of the labour market, it seems that the ex-Erasmus students do not have a hard time finding a job as only one of the 16 participants claimed not to be active on the labour market. Moreover, 75% of the participants claimed that they had always been employed after their graduation and 9 (56%) claimed that they had already worked abroad. 68% of the participants also stated that their work contracts were unlimited. Nonetheless, 6 survey participants have changed jobs more than six times.

Interviews with Erasmus programme coordinators at LMU showed that interest in the Erasmus program and also studying abroad in general seems to be quite low (Interviewee 2, 3). Interviewee 2 claimed that the students could not see the "added value" of Erasmus studies, and that often the incoming students were more mature than UK students. Furthermore, UK students "want to complete education – it is even difficult to get them to do a placement which would increase their employability" and have a "set plan" (Interviewee 2). Interviewee 3 stated that many of the students who start at LMU and move to Leeds "are likely to stick around; then they want to get their degree done as soon as possible so [studying abroad] is challenging their comfort zone and I think they are wary of the language – do they teach in English, and if the majority of our students are home students, they are not very much interested in going abroad". Interviewee 2 stated that from her experience, she did not "think that people know what Erasmus is. Even the administration, they don't know. Academics, most of them, they [just] know that it is an Exchange Programme". For some Erasmus programme coordinators, this lack of interest in Erasmus exchange leads to frustration. Interviewee 2 had participated in the Erasmus Programme at LMU herself and thus moved to England and ended up working at LMU. She asserted that "originally when I became Erasmus coordinator it was because I found it a very valuable experience I wanted to share and make them aware, British students and so on, but after a while I just gave up".

In terms of obstacles to mobility, the interviewees focused on some key aspects. Interviewee 5 argued that "there are two key things which hinder British students going abroad, the first one is the language barrier, which is the obvious one, and the second one is the ignorance, that they don't know about the countries, so they don't know enough about the countries in Europe [...] apart from the [countries] where they go for a sunny holiday". Furthermore, he added



that when students travel to other countries they always focus on the internationally well-known cities and capitals. To overcome the language barrier Interviewee 5 stated that he tried to set up two “partnerships with Ireland [...] one near Dublin, one near Cork (...) Dublin is one of those honey pot cities [...] People want to go there... as an international brand: similar to Berlin, Amsterdam”. Interviewee 1 countered this strategy with the argument that Ireland is “not glamorous enough” and is known to be expensive and that she thought that students who want to participate in student mobility “want to do this [...] cause they just want to travel, they want to go, they want to go outside of Europe”.

Another important obstacle to student exchange mobility can be the housing market in Leeds. Several interviewees confirmed this, Interviewee 2 explained: “It could also be as simple things as accommodation [...] so when they come to us, they have to sign a contract for a whole year” (Interviewee 2) and therefore, it could be hard for students to get out of their contractual obligations. Interviewee 5 summarized this: “in the first year in Leeds, [the students] become friends with people, they sign up for a house for the second year and then they can’t go off their contract and that’s another obstacle”. Respondent 1 further claimed that contractual obligations clearly became an issue, and that it is also common to sublet even while this is often not allowed in letting contracts. Respondent 1 added that he himself kept paying his room in Leeds while studying abroad as the Erasmus funding allowed him to pay the Estonian rent. Interviewee 1 added that in the UK “subletting is not allowed in general but if in the first year [students] know that [they] want to go abroad in the second year, university accommodation lets you sign a lease for half a year” as it is common that students live in uni[versity] accommodations during their first year and in their second year in private accommodations.

In terms of the duration of LMU students’ Erasmus stays, it seems that it is more common to go abroad for one semester, as often this can be fitted into their course schedules more easily. Furthermore, it is also fairly early in studies that they have to decide whether they want to study abroad. According to interviewees 1-5 the students are informed about the Erasmus programme or other study abroad options during their introduction week. In addition, there are additional information sessions in some departments as well as from the international office (Interviewee 1). For most students, the 3rd or 4th semester are advised as the best time to go abroad with the Erasmus programme and therefore, usually, students need to make the decision at latest in their 2nd year of studies (Interviewee 3). Thus, as they need to make the decision whether they want to study abroad so early, many students are worried about losing their accommodation and their friends when going abroad (Interviewee 1). Marks do not get recognized, just the credits, so depending on the student, this can be a disadvantage or an advantage in terms of the students final grades for their studies (Interviewee 1, 3). Especially for Master students, this seems to be an obstacle to student mobility

as it is a “high risk strategy for one year Master students, if they do that [...] if they don’t pass those credits, it is half their Master degree messed up I suppose” as Interviewee 1 stated. While theoretically it is possible to go abroad during a Master’s degree (Interviewee 1), it does not seem to be the case in practice as a Master usually only takes one year (Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3) Interviewee 2 stated that because UK students are so young when they start to study, they are so busy with establishing a circle of friends and with their social lives that they often don’t see other possibilities. Then again, Interviewee 2 added that she has some friends at the end of their thirties who have finished their studies quite early, worked for a while and then feel like they missed out on study abroad opportunities.

It also seems that for many students at LMU, alternatives to Erasmus exchange seem to be more interesting. Mostly English speaking countries “Australia and United States [are] more appealing [...] [students] just seem to be drawn to English-speaking places” (Interviewee 2). Interviewee 1 argued that a “key factor is that I think that the US and Australia are much more glamorous destinations for people – the ones who haven’t got an academic member of staff saying: ‘Well, this is an excellent university in Czech Republic’”. Nonetheless, according to Interviewee 1, it should not be assumed that this decision making is based on the supposedly better academic quality in certain countries as the United States. Interviewee 3 agreed that the decision making is not about academic value and added that “students do not really consider these things too much or think that strategically”. Interviewee 1 stated that UK students tend to be not very adventurous. Interviewee 3 challenged this statement by stating that British students have their gap years, before or also after their studies, and that, in general, they like to travel: for example to Australia, the US or New Zealand. Interviewee 3 stated that this might be due to the English language as well as “the whole fascination about America and Australia”. Interviewee 5 added that due to the presence of these countries in popular media, students are fascinated by them: “Australia is always popular cause of the sun and the sea and the surf and the romance of it”.

Students who actually go abroad seem to be generally more mobile or with previous mobility experiences. Among those students that are not mobile, Interviewee 5 claimed, “there is a genuine fear” of mobility and elaborated that “the one success story I’ve had with Erasmus, she was an international student in the first place, so she was not afraid of moving around and she was open to learning about another language and she was not stuck in her tenancy agreement”. So a number of requirements need to be fulfilled for students to be able to participate in student mobility. Interviewee 3 reported a case where a student went to Barcelona and had a cultural shock due to the different teaching and study styles, probably because she expected something similar to the British education system.

Erasmus programme coordinators at LMU all emphasized the benefits students would get from Erasmus exchange. According to Interviewee 2, participation in the Erasmus programme ensures “that British people are bothered with Europe

on a daily basis so they don't live in their own little bubble". Interviewee 3 noted "a wider cultural awareness of Europe and the countries [the students] go to. Interviewee 2 stated "It is the experience of a different culture, different approaches to study, meeting other people; I mean I met so many people and I have so many friends that I met during my studies. So for that networking kind of view and my experience. I could hardly speak English when I came over. And because of my experiences it made me more employable". Interviewee 5 stated that the Erasmus programme makes students "grow up, it makes them more independent, it makes them take responsibility and take on risk. I mean for me the second greatest education there is travel. Travel, experiencing new customs, cultures, language, currency, food, whatever, transport [...] opening your mind and seeing what is out there is one of the greatest things ever". Interviewee 5 then added that "you can send somebody abroad and they will say: I don't know anything about Spain now" but that they actually learnt something: "They might have heard the [...] language, they might have become aware of certain foods that existed because they did not know before, they might know the brand of the wine or the beer or the brandy [...] And that's the payoff: It's very often subtle but you know, it is getting out of your comfort zone, it is definitely [of] a professional development nature, to help people do develop themselves, in the terms that they develop a lot of employability skills, without even realizing it".

At the LMU, there is no general university strategy regarding new Erasmus agreements (Interviewee 1). Regarding new Erasmus agreements, Interviewee 3 stated that "the conversation I hear from the corridors is: why have more agreements when the ones we have are not even used?". While there does not seem to be much of a strategy for Erasmus outgoings, regarding incoming Erasmus students, there are some plans to advertise postgraduate studies at the LMU. Interviewee 1 added "I went to a conference about the national agenda for outward mobility last week and there they said that the two real ways forward are: one to build in mobility windows into the curricula and the other key strategy would be to help other teaching staff be better ambassadors".

For LMU students, only universities with an English track, who also teach in English, are really interesting for Erasmus exchange agreements (Interviewee 3). Interviewee 2 also stated that her department "looked over bilateral agreements to make sure that we only have agreements with institutions that teach in English" so most university departments assume that their students are only able to study in English. According to Interviewee 1, it does not make a difference for the university whether students go to the US or Europe. Interviewee 3 argued that there is some benefit in it for the students though, by participating in the Erasmus programme as they get the funding, which often is not available for other forms of student mobility. Moreover, Interviewee 3 stated that she thought that Erasmus exchange shaped young students, positively and negatively depending on circumstances. Interviewee 5 claimed that there was much competition in terms of

student mobility at the LMU. For example, there are special deals for volunteer's mobility at LMU as the "International Office has set packages in place where they get flight, food and stuff while they are there" (Interviewee 5).

## 5.6. CONCLUSION

While the internationalisation of higher education in the UK has developed increasing importance since the 1990s, the UK Government has made clear its intention to introduce measures to reduce net migration to the UK and has, as a consequence, instigated controls on international student mobility to the UK from outside the EU. While this has not limited student mobility from within the EU, it highlights the ambivalence that the UK has had politically with regard to student mobility more generally.

Despite this political ambivalence, on the one hand, more international students have been recruited to study at UK HEI's. On the other hand, UK HEI's have been active in developing courses and franchises in other parts of the world where markets have opened for universities to take advantage of these opportunities with the support and encouragement of their governments who recognise the economic benefits of doing so. Thus as well as the migration of the individual to undertake studies, there is also the mobility of the course itself to be recognised.

Nevertheless, historically, students in the UK have been a very mobile section of the society and it has long been the tradition within the UK that students moving into higher education leave the region of their parental home and study at a higher education institution (HEI) elsewhere. However, in recent years, there has been evidence of a shift to more UK students studying locally due to rising costs of tuition fees and accommodation costs. This has additionally meant that UK students may not find ERASMUS experiences viable.

In terms of ERASMUS, what is significant is the place of the UK, which although it does not have a significant ranking in terms of outgoing students, it does constitute the third main receiving country. At the national level, although UK universities follow the policy of '1 out 1 in' student, in practice this relation is overall 1 outgoing to 2 incoming. In terms of changes in the last decade, the Erasmus outgoing number has increased by 157%, with a total of 11,724 Erasmus students recorded in the 2009/10 academic year. Data gathered by the British Council shows that for outgoing UK Erasmus students, France is the most popular destination, constituting the country of destination of almost 33% of the students. Spain constitutes the second destination country, with almost 23% (which contradicts the general picture of ERASMUS mobility, Spain followed by France).

In terms of the picture at the Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU), per year, on average, 79 LMU students went abroad within the Erasmus programme (based on data collected from 2006 until 2014). Of those 79, on average, 38 studied

abroad, while about 41 students took part in work placements or language assistances abroad. In terms of incoming student at the Leeds Metropolitan University, France (a total of 170), Spain (132), the Netherlands (121), Germany (113), Poland (80), the Czech Republic (79), Finland (65), Norway (50), Sweden (42) and Belgium (38) are the countries who had most students coming to the LMU during the last eight years.

93.3% of the survey participants confirmed that Erasmus exchange had had a positive impact on their opinion about Europe. About 53% of the participants have returned to their Erasmus destination countries between 1–6 times. About 40% of the participants returned to their Erasmus exchange countries between 7 to 12 or even more times. 75% of the participants claimed that they had always been employed after their graduation and 56% claimed that they had already worked abroad.

Interviews with Erasmus programme coordinators at the LMU showed that interest in the Erasmus programme and also in studying abroad in general seems to be relatively low, with key obstacles to mobility being identified as the lack of language skills, a lack of cultural knowledge about the potential ERASMUS destinations as well as the UK housing market, which tends to ‘tie’ students into annual accommodation contracts. It also seems that for many students at the LMU, alternatives to Erasmus exchange seem to be more interesting, such as studying abroad in North America and Australia. Nevertheless, the Erasmus Programme coordinators at the LMU all emphasized the benefits students would get from Erasmus exchange, but many UK universities lack a cohesive strategy regarding new Erasmus agreements.

Overall, we conclude that the ambivalences of the UK government towards student mobility is also manifested in the UK students themselves towards ERASMUS mobility opportunities and obstacles to mobility, including the operation of the UK housing market prevent a fuller engagement. Nevertheless, those students that undertake ERASMUS mobility identify positive experiences and positive tendencies towards enhanced employability.

## Chapter 6

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IN POLAND – A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

#### 6.1. POLICY CONTEXT

The promotion of internationalisation of universities, including international mobility of students, is high on the Polish political agenda and receives unanimous support from all governmental institutions.

Mobility is considered as one of the 5 key development factors for Poland, alongside trust, cohesion, creativity and competitiveness (Boni 2009: 8–11). The document identifying strategic challenges until 2030 emphasises the importance of mobility and adaptability as well as life-long learning for contemporary labour markets. Mobility is also understood as freedom to cross national borders and look for a job abroad, which increases the importance of openness to intercultural experiences. Occupational, virtual, life-course and geographical mobility is considered a development factor. Mobility contributes to a customisation of student expectations, which transforms education systems. A low level of mobility is mentioned as a weakness of Polish educational institutions (Boni 2009: 233).

According to Bilanow (2007), the Polish government's most significant contribution to internationalization of higher education is its commitment to the Bologna process. The government financed Foundation for the Development of the Education System (Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji), which administers the Erasmus program, playing a crucial role in this student exchange within and outside Europe. The government also established the Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange (Biuro Uznawalności Wykształcenia i Wymiany Międzynarodowej) to serve in the ENIC (European Network of National Information Centres for academic recognition and mobility), and the NAR-IC (National Academic Recognition and Information Centre) networks, which facilitates the recognition of diplomas and the exchange of international students and academics.

The Polish government has also given special attention to members of the Polish Diaspora, especially to those who live in countries of the former Soviet Union and are descendants of those who were forcibly deported during the Stalinist era. Students with Polish ancestors, who are already enrolled in higher education in their home countries, can apply for Polish government scholarships enabling them to attend universities in Poland.

The Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP), an organization of university leaders, together with the Perspektywy Education Foundation, implemented a multi-year program to promote Polish higher education abroad called “Study in Poland”. Organizing conferences and encouraging international educators to attend higher education fairs, this program plays an important role in providing information on higher education markets, and in helping universities to get access to these markets.

In the framework of Polish presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2011, Prof. Barbara Kudrycka, then Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education, called for Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine to be included in Erasmus, as well as Balkan countries such as Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Grove 2011). She explained her proposal as follows: “We want to extend the funding of student exchange programs to include doctoral students, as well as increase the funding of mobility of citizens of Eastern Partnership countries. Currently, only 2 percent of Erasmus Mundus beneficiaries are citizens of these countries. Interestingly, the EC is likely to propose a completely new strategy for creating mobility programs and does not rule out increasing the support for students from Eastern Partnership by 2014. And this would coincide with our ultimate goal – making better use of intellectual capital, this huge potential of knowledge and talent of the Europeans” (Rybicka 2011).

## 6.2. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: FACTS AND FIGURES

Poland tends to attract more and more foreign students (Fig. 6.1). Their number grew from 5,693 in 1999 to 21,474 in 2010. This positive trend accelerated after Polish accession into the European Union in 2004.

In 2010/11 (as of 30.11.2010), there were 1,841,251 students in Poland, including 1,082,483 females (58.8%), in 460 higher education institutions (Central Statistical Office 2011). Four academic centres at the county level of administration (*powiat*), exceeded 100 thousand students: Warsaw, Cracow, Wroclaw, and Poznan. There were 14 counties with 20-100 thousand students, the most important of which were Lodz, Lublin, Gdansk, and Katowice. In the 8 aforementioned cities 58.9% of all students in Poland were enrolled. Out of the 460

higher education institutions, 132 were public (with 68.5% of all students) and 328 were private (with 31.5% of all students). 949,476 students were enrolled in full-time programmes (51.6%) and 891,775 followed part-time studies (48.4%). 1,395,056 (75.8%) followed first-cycle programmes (at the Bachelor level) and long-cycle programmes (undivided into Bachelor and Master, including law and medicine), 376,474 (20.4%) were enrolled in second-cycle programmes (Master level), and 69,721 were after the last year of studies without passing the diploma exams.

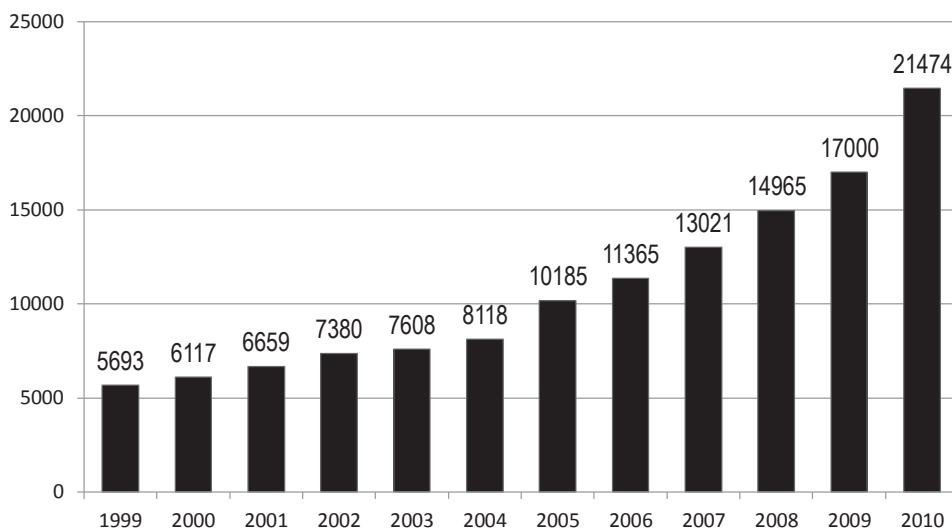


Figure 6.1. Evolution of the number of foreign students in Poland (1999–2010)

Source: own graph on the basis of: Marchwica 2011: 17

In the total student population in Poland, 21,474 were foreign students, which was only 1.17%. Their distribution by sex shows almost equal shares of males and females (Fig. 6.2), whereas in the general student population, the share of women was higher (58.8 % as mentioned above).

A vast majority (over 4/5) of foreign students in Poland followed their first-cycle programme (Bachelor level) (Fig. 6.3). This proportion was even higher than for the total student population in Poland ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ).

Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of foreign students in Poland were enrolled in public higher education institutions (Fig. 6.4). Their share was even higher than in the general student population in Poland (68.5%).

Almost 4/5 of foreign students in Poland followed full-time programmes of studies (Fig. 6.5), which was significantly higher than in the entire student population (slightly above half of which were full-time students).



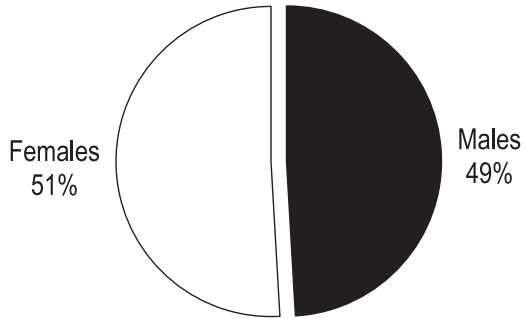


Figure 6.2. Structure of foreign students in Poland by sex (2010)

Source: own graph on the basis of Central Statistical Office 2011: 240

Note: 'other' means 'after the last year of studies without passing the diploma exams'

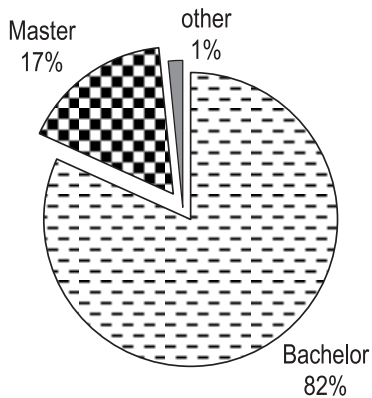


Figure 6.3. Structure of foreign students in Poland by the level of studies (2010)

Source: own graph on the basis of Central Statistical Office 2011: 248–249

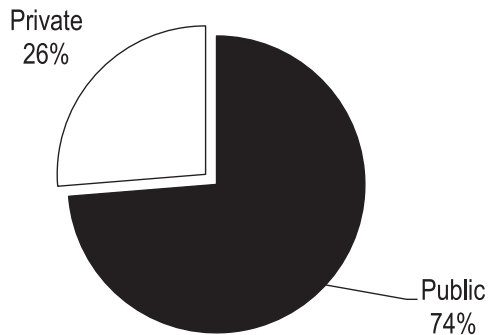


Figure 6.4. Structure of foreign students in Poland by the type of university (2010)

Source: own graph on the basis of Central Statistical Office 2011: 242–247

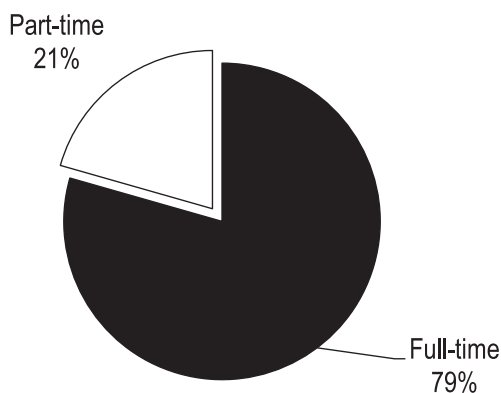


Figure 6.5. Structure of foreign students in Poland by the type of the programme of studies (2010)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Central Statistical Office 2011: 239

Table 6.1. Foreign students in Poland by age (2010)

Age	Foreign students		All students	
	Total	%	Total	%
≤ 18	2,188	10.19	6,393	0.35
19	1,929	8.98	193,984	10.54
20	2,228	10.38	265,666	14.43
21	2,603	12.12	269,288	14.63
22	2,612	12.16	259,500	14.09
23	2,255	10.50	243,806	13.24
24	1,888	8.79	161,348	8.76
25	1,405	6.54	98,620	5.36
26	1,004	4.68	61,631	3.35
27	748	3.48	41,601	2.26
28	555	2.58	28,714	1.56
29	402	1.87	22,300	1.21
≥ 30	1,657	7.72	188,400	10.23
Total	21,474	100.00	1,841,251	100.00

Source: own calculations on the basis of: Central Statistical Office 2011: 138 and 254.

It is worth noting that the age structure of foreign students is similar to the entire student population in Poland with the exception of the youngest age group (up to 18 years old), where there are relatively much more foreign students (Tab. 6.1).

It is interesting to have a look at the structure of foreign students in Poland by the field of studies compared to the general student population (Tab. 6.2).

The most striking difference is the importance of health-related studies among foreign students in Poland. It is the most important field of study for this group of students, accounting for over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all foreign students in Poland, whereas it is represented by only 7% of the entire student population. This may be related to the relatively lower costs of studying medicine and dentistry in Poland compared to the USA and Western Europe, notwithstanding high quality standards of health education. The second and third positions are taken by business and administration, and social sciences, respectively, similarly to the general student population. Among Polish students, the third most popular subgroup of fields of studies is teacher training and education, which attracted only 3% of foreign students, which may partly be explained by a stronger embeddedness of this kind of studies in the national systems of education and the importance of local languages.

Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of foreign students in Poland come from Europe,  $\frac{1}{6}$  from Asia, and  $\frac{1}{15}$  from North America (according to citizenship) (Tab. 6.3).

Table 6.2. Foreign students in Poland by the field of studies (2010)

Subgroups of fields of education	Foreign students		All students	
	Total	%	Total	%
Health	5,952	27.72	133,189	7.23
Business and administration	4,521	21.05	415,559	22.57
Social sciences	3,220	14.99	221,389	12.02
Humanities	1,911	8.90	137,584	7.47
Personal services	988	4.60	66,507	3.61
Engineering	876	4.08	132,093	7.17
Computing	750	3.49	73,955	4.02
Teacher training and education	644	3.00	217,464	11.81
Arts	502	2.34	29,383	1.60
Law	485	2.26	58,307	3.17
Architecture and building	410	1.91	78,035	4.24
Journalism and information	243	1.13	23,540	1.28
Manufacturing and processing	204	0.95	63,765	3.46
Veterinary	148	0.69	4,666	0.25
Life science	107	0.50	33,628	1.83
Physical science	107	0.50	27,412	1.49
Environmental protection	97	0.45	27,341	1.48
Transport services	96	0.45	18,895	1.03
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	90	0.42	28,074	1.52
Mathematics and statistics	71	0.33	16,876	0.92
Security services	46	0.21	27,657	1.50
Social services	6	0.03	5,932	0.32
Total	21,474	100.00	1,841,251	100.00

Source: own calculations on the basis of: Central Statistical Office 2011: 58–59 and 240–241.

Table 6.3. Foreign students in Poland by the continent of origin (2010)

Continent	Foreign students	
	Total	%
Europe	15,618	72.73
Asia	3,481	16.21
North and Central America	1,525	7.10
Africa	725	3.38
South America	94	0.44
Australia and Oceania	25	0.12
Without citizenship	6	0.03
Total	21,474	100.00

Source: own calculations on the basis of: Central Statistical Office 2011: 258–261.

Table 6.4. The most important countries of origin of foreign students in Poland (2010)

Rank	Country of origin	Foreign students	
		Total	%
1	Ukraine	4,879	22.72
2	Belarus	2,605	12.13
3	Norway	1,406	6.55
4	Sweden	1,089	5.07
5	Spain	1,076	5.01
6	United States of America	1,004	4.68
7	Lithuania	798	3.72
8	Germany	664	3.09
9	Taiwan	631	2.94
10	Czech Republic	537	2.50
11	Russia	529	2.46
12	China	515	2.40
13	Canada	456	2.12
14	Kazakhstan	382	1.78
15	France	334	1.56
	Other	4,569	21.28
	Total	21,474	100.00

Source: own calculations on the basis of: Central Statistical Office 2011: 258–261.

Poland admits foreign students from many countries, with the highest inflows from Ukraine, which accounts for almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all foreign students in Poland, as well as Belarus, Norway, Sweden, Spain, and the United States of America (Tab. 6.4). The top 2 countries of origin are Eastern neighbours of Poland with strong historical connections, and a significant population of inhabitants having a Polish origin and/or language competence. Moreover, there are special

policies at the national level aiming to facilitate the inflow of students from these countries. Recent political developments in Ukraine may help strengthen the academic cooperation further. The mobility from Scandinavian countries and the US is probably influenced by favourable financial conditions of studying in Poland coupled with high quality of studies available in English.

Over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of foreign students in Poland (5,657) come from other European Union member states (figure 6.6). The largest groups arrive from Sweden (1,089), Spain (1,076), Lithuania (798), Germany (664), Czech Republic (537), France (334), UK (164), Italy (154), Portugal (145), and Slovakia (117).

Almost  $\frac{1}{5}$ , i.e. 4,117 out of 21,474 foreign students in Poland have a Polish origin (figure 6.7). In this group, the most significant countries of origin are: Belarus (1077), Ukraine (955), Lithuania (661), Kazakhstan (225), Germany (168), USA (153), Canada (130), Russia (128), Sweden (102), and the Czech Republic (86). It is worth noting that the share of students with Polish origin in all foreign students in Poland declined from 36.9% in 2005 to 17.6% in 2010, although their absolute number remained at a constant level during this period (Marchwica 2011: 18).

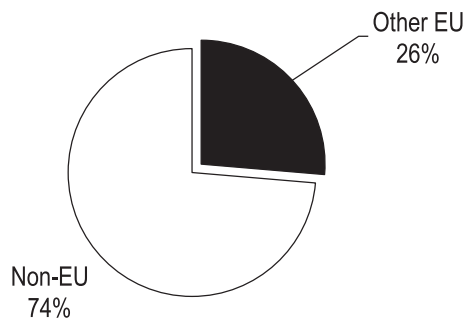


Figure 6.6. The share of European Union other member states in the origin of foreign students in Poland (2010)

Source: own graph on the basis of: Central Statistical Office 2011: 258–261

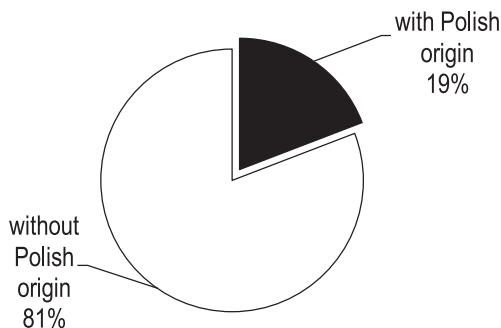


Figure 6.7. The share of foreign students in Poland with Polish origin (2010)

Source: own graph on the basis of: (Central Statistical Office 2011: 261–263)

Table 6.5. Top 10 Polish universities regarding the number of foreign students (2010)

Rank	University	Foreign students
1	University of Warsaw	1,703
2	Jagiellonian University of Cracow	1,290
3	Medical University of Poznan	1,059
4	Medical University of Lublin	896
5	Higher School of Computer Science and Management in Przemysl	859
6	Medical University of Gdansk	649
7	University of Wroclaw	628
8	University of Bialystok	618
9	Medical University of Warsaw	599
10	Technical University of Warsaw	544

Source: own graph on the basis of: Marchwica 2011: 21.

The highest numbers of foreign students are recorded in public universities with the exception of a private higher education institution in Przemysl, which ranked 5<sup>th</sup> (Tab. 6.5). The table is led by the biggest Polish universities: University of Warsaw and the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. It is worth noting that medical universities score very high in this ranking. There are 4 of them in the top 10 apart from those general universities that also have a medical department like the Jagiellonian University of Cracow and the University of Bialystok. The University of Lodz took the 20<sup>th</sup> position in Poland with 293 foreign students in 2010. The internationalisation strategy adopted by the University of Lodz brings positive results, as only two years later, in 2012, it had as many as 480 foreign students (Central Statistical Office 2013: 124).

Table 6.6. Top 10 Polish universities regarding the share of foreign students in all students (%) (2010)

Rank	University	Share of foreign students
1	Medical University of Szczecin	14.08
2	Medical University of Poznan	12.68
3	Medical University of Lublin	12.35
4	Medical University of Gdansk	11.88
5	Lazarski University of Warsaw	11.56
6	Higher School of Entrepreneurship and Social Sciences in Otwock	11.45
7	Skarbek Higher School of Trade and International Finances in Warsaw	10.24
8	Higher School of Computer Science and Management in Rzeszow	9.71
9	Medical Academy of Wroclaw	7.64
10	Collegium Civitas in Warsaw	7.04

Source: own graph on the basis of: Marchwica 2011: 22.

It is also interesting to have a look at the relative level of internationalisation of Polish higher education institutions measured with the share of foreign students in the total student population (Tab. 6.6). This ranking is led by 4 medical universities followed by 4 private universities. The University of Warsaw, which was the best in absolute numbers, here has only the 26<sup>th</sup> position. Neither the University of Lodz, nor the Medical University of Lodz are mentioned in the top 50 Polish universities on the basis of this criterion.

Table 6.7. The regional statistics concerning foreign students in Poland (2010)

Rank	Region ( <i>Województwo</i> )	Foreign students	
		Number	% share in Poland
1	Mazowieckie	6,276	29.23
2	Małopolskie	2,294	10.68
3	Dolnośląskie	2,094	9.75
4	Lubelskie	2,005	9.34
5	Wielkopolskie	1,898	8.84
6	Podlaskie	1,186	5.52
7	Podkarpackie	1,128	5.25
8	Pomorskie	1,121	5.22
9	Łódzkie	1,108	5.16
10	Zachodniopomorskie	842	3.92
11	Śląskie	736	3.43
12	Kujawsko-pomorskie	317	1.48
13	Opolskie	188	0.88
14	Warmińsko-mazurskie	162	0.75
15	Lubuskie	84	0.39
16	Świętokrzyskie	35	0.16

Source: own graph on the basis of: Marchwica 2011: 19.

Almost 1 in 3 foreign students in Poland is located in the capital region – Mazowieckie (Tab. 6.7). The second rank is taken by the Małopolskie region with Cracow, the third by Dolnośląskie with Wroclaw, the fourth by Lubelskie with Lublin, and the fifth by Wielkopolskie with Poznan as its capital. The Łódzkie region with Lodz ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of the 16 Polish regions (*województwo*), which were created during the latest administrative reform in 1999 (previously Poland was divided into 49 small voivodships). The latest administrative reform also introduced an intermediate level of territorial unit between the region (voivodship) and municipality (*gmina*) called *powiat* (county) as well as it reinforced the powers of self-government at all three levels.

## 6.3. ERASMUS MOBILITY IN POLAND

The overall success of the European student mobility scheme called Erasmus is undisputable. The statistics on the student mobility across Europe show a long-term impressive growth. The programme started with 3,244 students participating in the international exchange during the first academic year of its functioning, reached 100,000 students in 1999/2000 and exceeded 200,000 per academic year just a decade later. The trend is supported by the successive accession of new member states into the European Union.

Poland occupies the 5<sup>th</sup> position in the European Union in terms of the number of outgoing Erasmus students (student mobility for studies) (Tab. 6.8). Higher figures were reported only by Spain, France, Germany, and Italy. Poland has more outgoing Erasmus students than the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and more than Turkey, in spite of smaller general population. Compared to the academic year 2003/04, Poland recorded a very dynamic growth in the number of outgoing Erasmus students, reaching 11,613 in 2009/10.

However, if we relate the number of Erasmus students to the total population of students, the picture for Poland is no longer so rosy. It ranks at the bottom of the European table with just 0.65% of students participating in Erasmus during the academic year 2009/10. It is well below the European average of 0.94%. Only Norway, Bulgaria, Greece, UK, Romania, Turkey, and Croatia performed worse (Fig. 6.8). Luxembourg and Liechtenstein are unquestionable leaders in this ranking, with respectively 15.71% and 3.32% of the total student population leaving for Erasmus in 2009/10 (excluded from the graph as outstanding values). As it was possible to leave for Erasmus partial studies abroad only once during the whole span of one's tertiary education, it was estimated that altogether approximately 4% of students from countries participating in the programme benefitted from student mobility for studies.

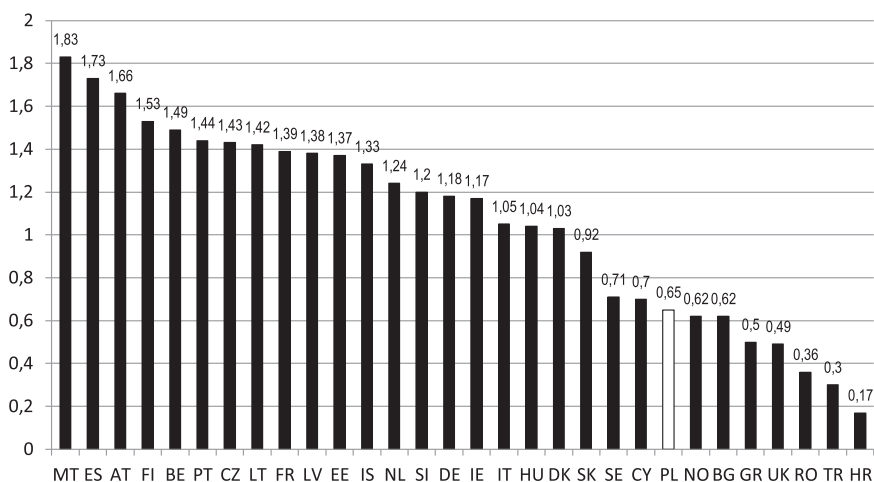


Figure 6.8. Outgoing Erasmus students as a share of student population by country (2009/10) (%)

Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 22



It is worth noting that Poland attracts far fewer foreign Erasmus students than it sends abroad. In 2009/10, there were 5,521 incoming Erasmus students in Poland (student mobility for studies). It was less popular among foreign Erasmus students not only compared to European giants like Spain, France, Germany, UK, and Italy, but also in comparison with certain smaller member states such as: Sweden, Holland, Portugal, Finland, Denmark, and Belgium. However, a few years before Poland performed even worse in that regard, attracting very low numbers of Erasmus students (Tab. 6.8).

Table 6.8. Erasmus student mobility for studies in 2009/10 by country

Country	Symbol	Outgoing students	Incoming students	Difference (outgoing – incoming)	Incoming / outgoing ratio (%)
1	2	3	4	5	6
Austria	AT	4,234	4,136	98	97.7
Belgium	BE	5,269	5,529	–260	104.9
Bulgaria	BG	1,451	401	1,050	27.6
Croatia	HR	235	0	235	0
Cyprus	CY	199	297	–98	149.2
Czech Republic	CZ	5,338	4,129	1,209	77.4
Denmark	DK	1,794	5,728	–3,934	319.3
Estonia	EE	725	658	67	90.8
Finland	FI	3,529	6,086	–2,557	172.5
France	FR	24,426	22,022	2,404	90.2
Germany	DE	24,029	17,906	6,123	74.5
Greece	GR	2,790	2,059	731	73.8
Hungary	HU	3,421	2,454	967	71.7
Iceland	IS	215	411	–196	191.2
Ireland	IE	1,600	3,958	–2,358	247.4
Italy	IT	19,118	15,858	3,260	82.9
Latvia	LV	1,269	418	851	32.9
Liechtenstein	LI	19	32	–13	168.4
Lithuania	LT	2,277	1,193	1,084	52.4
Luxembourg	LU	445	57	388	12.8
Malta	MT	122	448	–326	367.2
Netherlands	NL	5,358	7,237	–1,879	135.1
Norway	NO	1,262	3,409	–2,147	270.1
Poland	PL	11,613	5,534	6,092	47.5
Portugal	PT	4,677	6,608	–1,931	141.3
Romania	RO	3,129	1,079	2,050	34.5
Slovakia	SK	1,798	894	904	49.7
Slovenia	SI	1,118	1,114	4	99.6
Spain	ES	27,448	29,326	–1,878	106.8
Sweden	SE	2,728	8,780	–6,052	321.8

Table 6.8. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Turkey	TR	8,016	2,899	5,117	36.2
United Kingdom	UK	8,053	16,823	-8,770	208.9
Total	x	177,705	177,705	0	100.0

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 23–24.

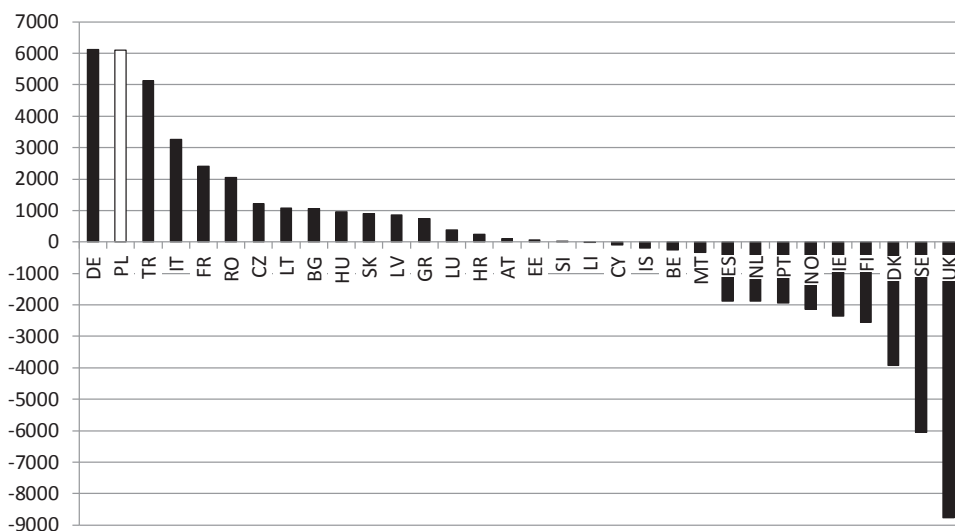


Figure 6.9. Net result of Erasmus student mobility for studies by country (2009/10)

Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 23–24

Erasmus student mobility in Europe is far from balanced if we investigate it at the national level (Fig. 6.9, Tab. 6.8). Certain participating countries tend to send much more Erasmus students abroad than they receive. This group includes Germany, Poland, Turkey, Italy, France, and Romania. Meanwhile, the situation is reversed for: the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Spain. These countries attract significantly more Erasmus students than they send abroad. The most balanced exchange in Erasmus student mobility for studies in terms of absolute figures was observed in Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Estonia, Austria, and Cyprus. There are various reasons for this kind of student mobility patterns, including economic, social, cultural, geographic and linguistic factors.

Student mobility patterns may also be analysed in relative terms. It is possible to investigate the proportion of incoming Erasmus students to the number of outgoing (Fig. 6.10, Tab. 6.8). It is worth noting that this ratio often leads to different

conclusions than the absolute differentials examined previously. In relative terms, it is Malta that has the most imbalanced exchange at one end of the spectrum, as it receives almost four times as much Erasmus students as it sends abroad. At the other end of the axis, there was Croatia with no incoming Erasmus students as it had just adhered to the programme. The proportion was very high for Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, and the UK. Incoming students constituted there more than twice as much as outgoing. At the other extreme, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, Turkey, followed by Poland, had the lowest ratio of incoming to outgoing Erasmus students. The most equilibrated exchange was reported in Slovenia, Austria, Belgium, and Spain. Poland received fewer than a half of the number of its outgoing Erasmus students.

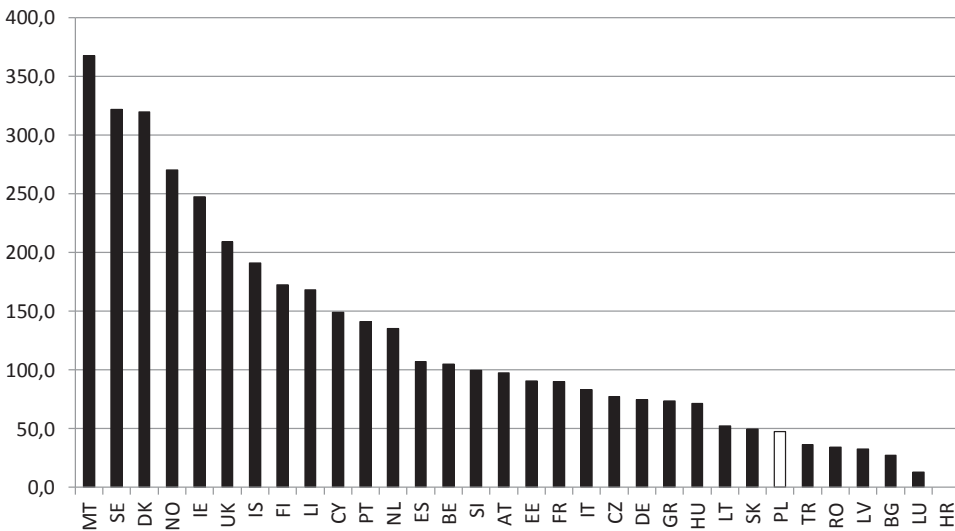


Figure 6.10. Incoming to outgoing Erasmus students for studies by country (2009/10) (%)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 23–24

The following universities had the highest number of outgoing Erasmus students (for studies and placements) in 2009/10: Universidad de Granada (1851), Universidad Complutense de Madrid (1562), Università di Bologna (1548), and Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (1265). Therefore, the most active in Erasmus were Spanish academic institutions. The university of Warsaw (Uniwersytet Warszawski) scored very well with the sixth place in this ranking having sent 1255 Erasmus students. In the top 20 sending institutions, there was also the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan (16<sup>th</sup> place) followed by the Jagiellonian University of Cracow (17<sup>th</sup>). In the top 20, there were as many as ten Spanish universities, 3 Italian, 3 Polish, 2 Czech, 1 Austrian, and 1 Slovenian university (Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 20).

As far as incoming Erasmus students are concerned, the leading university was the same – Universidad de Granada, which admitted 1862 Erasmus students. It was followed by Universitat de Valencia (1770), Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (1638), Universidad Complutense de Madrid (1601), and Università di Bologna (1465). In the top 20 receiving institutions, there were again 10 Spanish universities, 3 Italian, 3 Swedish, 1 Danish, 1 Czech, 1 German, and 1 Austrian. Polish universities performed much worse from this perspective. The best one was the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, which occupied the 55<sup>th</sup> position with 512 incoming Erasmus students (Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 21).

Table 6.9. Erasmus student mobility for placements in 2009/10 by country

Country	Symbol	Outgoing students	Incoming students	Difference (outgoing – incoming)	Incoming / outgoing ratio (%)
1	2	3	4	5	6
Austria	AT	878	786	92	89.5
Belgium	BE	1,078	1,765	-687	163.7
Bulgaria	BG	236	226	10	95.8
Cyprus	CY	17	155	-138	911.8
Czech Republic	CZ	637	479	158	75.2
Denmark	DK	622	458	164	73.6
Estonia	EE	214	109	105	50.9
Finland	FI	1,020	491	529	48.1
France	FR	5,787	4,108	1,679	71.0
Germany	DE	4,825	4,582	243	95.0
Greece	GR	389	924	-535	237.5
Hungary	HU	719	330	389	45.9
Iceland	IS	10	80	-70	800.0
Ireland	IE	528	1,115	-587	211.2
Italy	IT	1,921	2,253	-332	117.3
Latvia	LV	23	256	-233	1113.0
Liechtenstein	LI	6	14	-8	233.3
Lithuania	LT	725	178	547	24.6
Luxembourg	LU	467	108	359	23.1
Malta	MT	67	431	-364	643.3
Netherlands	NL	2,320	1,355	965	58.4
Norway	NO	94	456	-362	485.1
Poland	PL	2,408	536	1,872	22.3

Table 6.9. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Portugal	PT	711	769	-58	108.2
Romania	RO	865	246	619	28.4
Slovakia	SK	353	181	172	51.3
Slovenia	SI	250	133	117	53.2
Spain	ES	3,710	6,061	-2,351	163.4
Sweden	SE	269	712	-443	264.7
Turkey	TR	742	437	305	58.9
United Kingdom	UK	3,670	5,827	-2,157	158.8
Total	x	35,561	35,561	0	100.0

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 26–27.

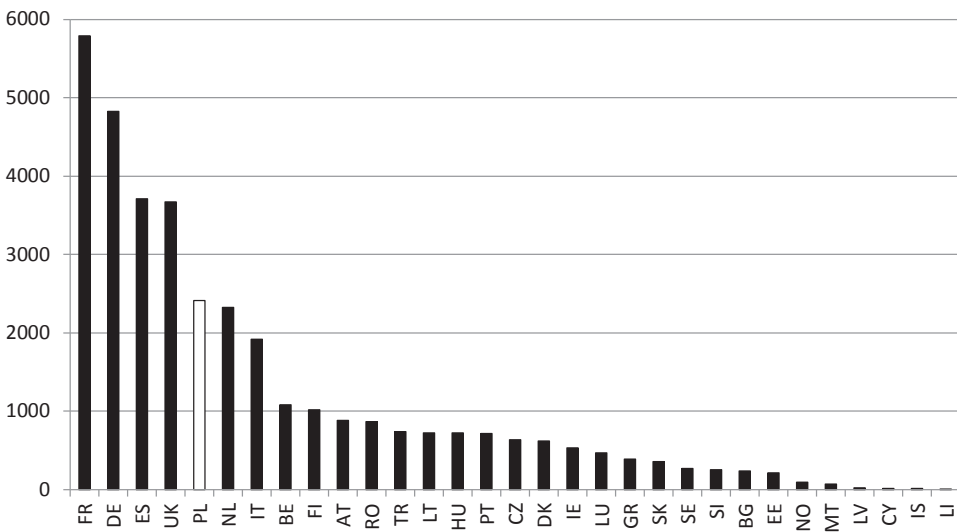


Figure 6.11. Outgoing Erasmus students for placements by country (2009/10)

Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 26–27

As far as student mobility for placements (SMP) is concerned, it is one of the most dynamic actions of the Erasmus programme. This type of mobility was introduced in 2007/08. The year-to-year dynamic in 2009/10 amounted to 17%. The placement may last from 3 to 12 months and has to be recognised by the home university. In 2009/10, France was the leader in terms of outgoing Erasmus students for placements, followed by Germany, Spain, and the UK. Poland took the fifth position with 2408 such grants. The smallest numbers

were recorded in less populous member states (Fig. 6.11, Tab. 6.9). These results are partially determined by the total student population, the importance attached to placements in university curricula, command of foreign languages etc.

Regarding the incoming Erasmus students for placements, the most attractive member states in 2009/10 were: Spain, the UK, Germany, and France. Poland scored in the middle of the table having the 13<sup>th</sup> position (Fig. 6.12, Tab. 6.9). Several factors contribute to these results, including the size of the country, language, climate, availability of placement offers, business links with a given country etc.

If we take into consideration the differentials between the number of outgoing and incoming Erasmus students for placements, it turns out that Poland has the biggest positive outcome, i.e. it sends much more students than it receives, and Spain has the highest negative result, which means the opposite (Fig. 6.13, Tab. 6.9). Poland is followed by France and the Netherlands at the one extreme of the continuum. Students from these countries tend to benefit from Erasmus placements in foreign companies and institutions more often than they absorb foreign students for placements in domestic institutions and companies. At the other end of the axis, Spain is followed by the UK, Belgium, Ireland, and Greece. These countries tend to attract much more foreign Erasmus students for placements than they send abroad. The most balanced Erasmus exchange for placements was observed in Liechtenstein, Bulgaria, Portugal, Iceland, and Austria.

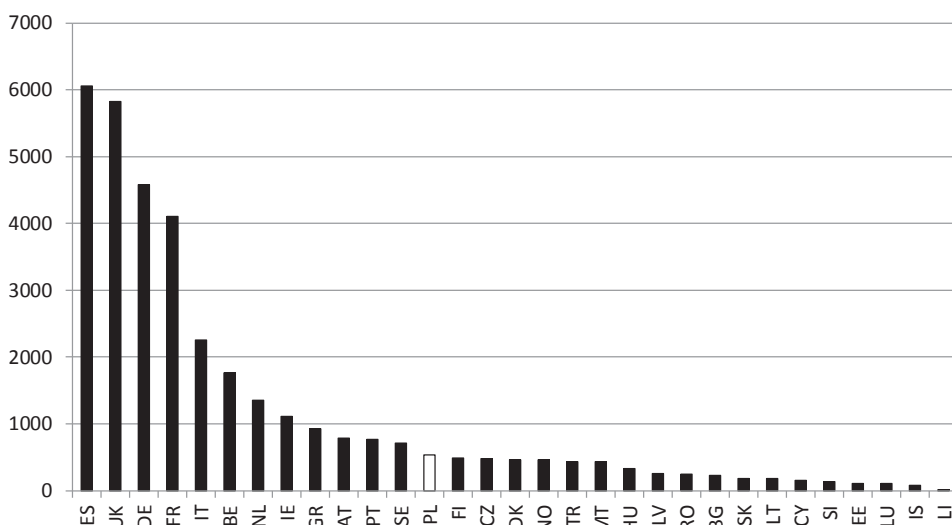


Figure 6.12. Incoming Erasmus students for placements by country (2009/10)

Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 26–27

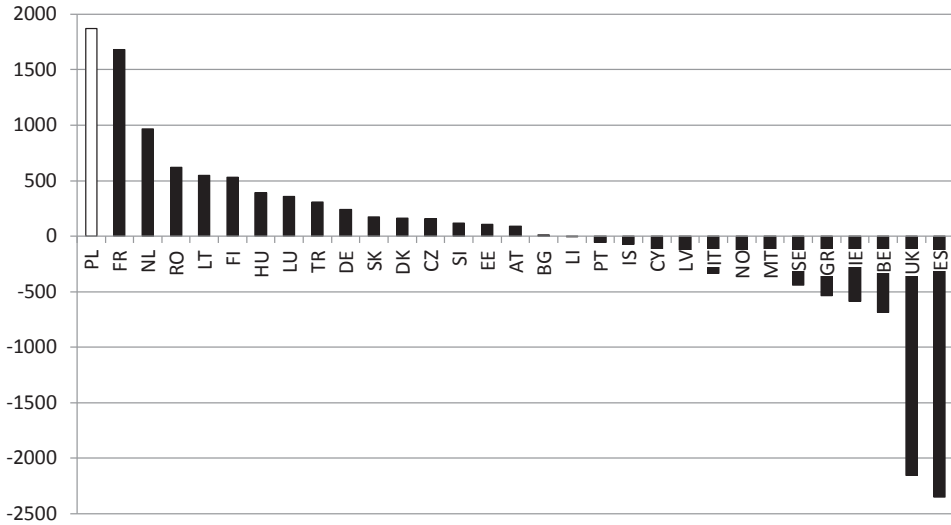


Figure 6.13. Net result of Erasmus student mobility for placements by country (2009/10)  
 Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 26–27

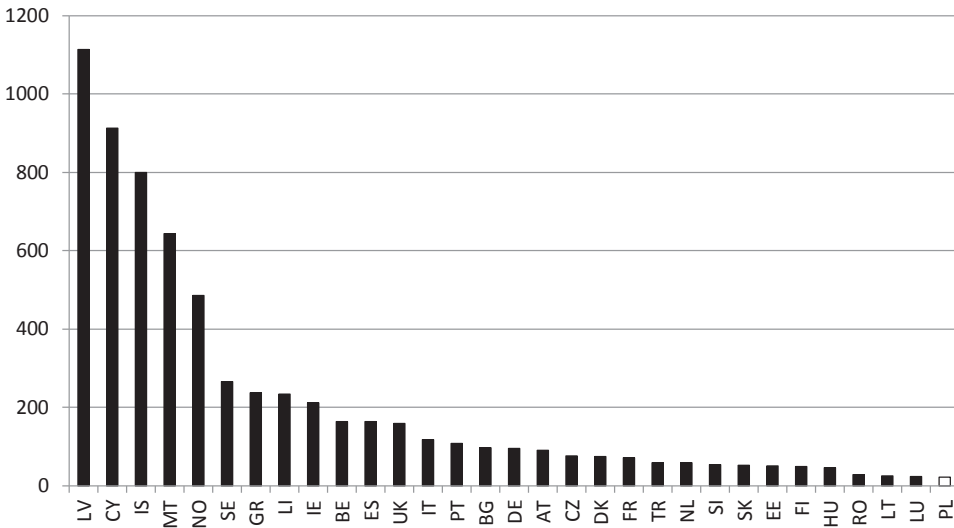


Figure 6.14. Incoming to outgoing Erasmus students for placements by country (2009/10) (%)  
 Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 26–27

As far as relative differences are concerned, it is worth noting that Poland scores at the bottom of the table with almost five times more outgoing Erasmus students for placements than their incoming counterparts (Fig. 6.14, Tab. 6.9).

It is followed by Luxembourg, Lithuania, and Romania. At the other extreme, there is Latvia, which received 11 times more Erasmus students for placements than it sent, followed by Cyprus, Iceland, Malta, and Norway.

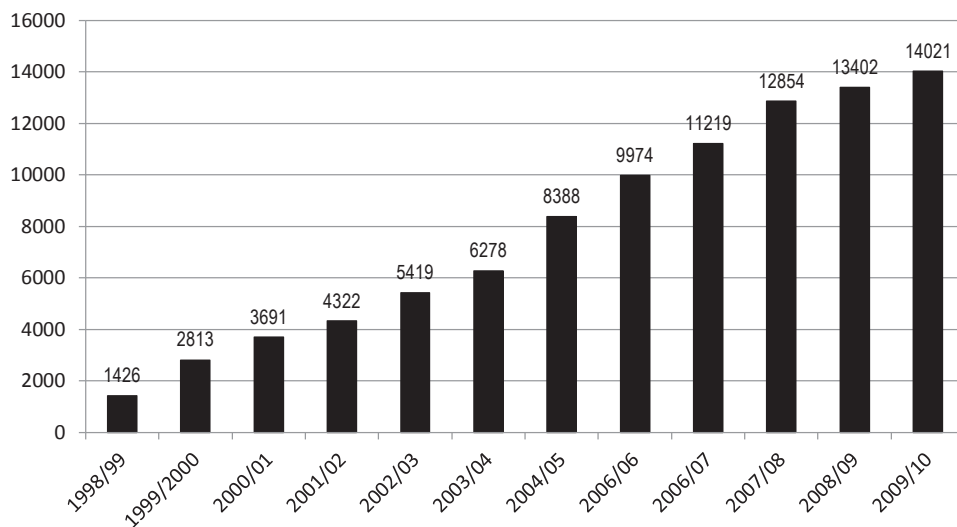


Figure 6.15. Evolution of the total number of Polish outgoing Erasmus students (1998/99–2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 29

Since the academic year 1998/99, when Poland joined the Erasmus programme, we may observe a steady systematic growth of the number of Polish students taking advantage of the opportunity to study abroad. The total number of Polish outgoing Erasmus students (mobility for studies and placements combined) rose tenfold during 11 years of the programme implementation to reach over 14 thousand in 2009/10 (Fig. 6.15). From 1998 to 2010, 93,807 Polish students had the opportunity to study and live abroad thanks to Erasmus.

In 2009/10, 11,613 Polish students benefited from a study period abroad in the framework of Erasmus. The average length of stay was just over 6 months, and the average grant amounted to 372 EUR per month.

Exactly 7 out of 10 were female (Fig. 6.16). This gender imbalance may be related to the structure of the entire student population in Poland, but it was more pronounced in the group of Erasmus students. Therefore, we may conclude that females are more mobile than males even if we adjust for the sex structure of the entire population of students in Poland. The biggest disproportion was recorded at the BA level of studies (there were 72% of females among the Erasmus outgoing students), and the lowest for doctoral students (62.5% of females).



As far as the level of studies is concerned, 6,071 Polish Master students, 5,422 Bachelor students, and 120 doctoral students left for Erasmus in 2009/10. Fig. 6.17 illustrates this structure, which differed significantly from the European average (with 69% of Bachelor students). Master students are overrepresented in the group of Erasmus students compared to the general student population in Poland.

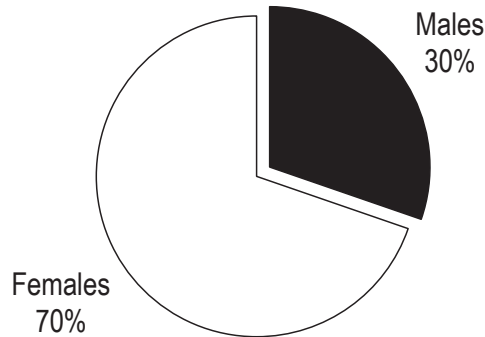


Figure 6.16. Structure of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for studies by sex (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 35

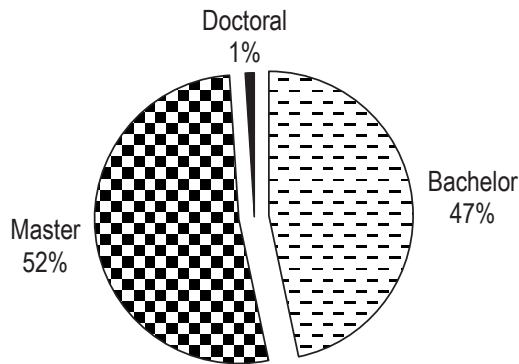


Figure 6.17. Structure of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for studies by the level of studies (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 35

In 2009/10, 288 Polish higher education institutions had adopted the Erasmus University Charter, out of which 248 signed the Financial Agreement with the National Agency (FRSE) and 233 actually organised at least one mobility flow. Half of them (117) were public. Regarding the student mobility for studies, 109 public and 93 private Polish universities sent some of their students abroad. Nevertheless, public higher education institutions account for a vast majority of Polish outgoing Erasmus students (Fig. 6.18). This is due to their higher potential in the total number of students, but also more experience in foreign contacts and a different profile of students – more oriented to academic achievements than in most private schools.

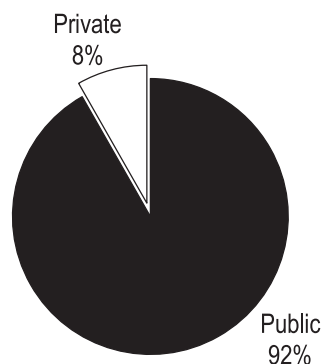


Figure 6.18. Structure of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for studies by university type (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 37

All the top 10 Polish universities in terms of the number of outgoing Erasmus students for studies are big public institutions (Tab. 6.10). The same is true for the top 16 universities that sent over 200 Erasmus students in 2009/10. The most important player is the University of Warsaw, which managed to send over 1100 students abroad in the framework of Erasmus student mobility for studies (SMS). This is also the biggest Polish university. The runner-up was the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, which is the oldest higher education institution in Poland, established in 1348. The third place was taken by the University of Poznan, followed by the University of Wrocław. The University of Lodz was the 5<sup>th</sup> in terms of the number of outgoing Erasmus students, with 386 in 2009/10. Apart from the general, comprehensive universities, there were 5 technical universities and 3 economic universities in the top 16.

Table 6.10. Top 10 Polish universities regarding the number of outgoing Erasmus students for studies in 2009/10

Rank	University	Erasmus code	Outgoing Erasmus students for studies
1	University of Warsaw	PL WARSZAW01	1,117
2	Jagiellonian University of Cracow	PL KRAKOW01	783
3	Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan	PL POZANAN01	775
4	University of Wrocław	PL WROCLAW01	526
5	University of Lodz	PL LODZ01	386
6	Technical University of Warsaw	PL WARSZAW02	352
7	Nicolas Copernicus University of Torun	PL TORUN01	326
8	Silesian University of Katowice	PL KATOWIC01	269
9	Technical University of Lodz	PL LODZ02	261
10	University of Gdansk	PL GDANSK01	250

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 35.

Table 6.11. The regional statistics concerning Erasmus outward student mobility for studies in Poland in 2009/10

Rank	Region ( <i>Województwo</i> )	No. of universities organising mobility	Number of outgoing Erasmus students for studies
1	Mazowieckie	38	2,619
2	Małopolskie	21	1,760
3	Wielkopolskie	21	1,507
4	Dolnośląskie	22	1,345
5	Łódzkie	10	786
6	Śląskie	22	771
7	Pomorskie	14	656
8	Kujawsko-pomorskie	8	468
9	Lubelskie	12	389
10	Podlaskie	7	314
11	Zachodniopomorskie	7	258
12	Podkarpackie	6	238
13	Warmińsko-mazurskie	3	199
14	Opolskie	3	157
15	Lubuskie	3	74
16	Świętokrzyskie	5	72

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 36.

It is also possible to analyse the geographical distribution of the sources of Erasmus student mobility in Poland (Tab. 6.11). In 1999, Poland implemented a reform of its administrative system, establishing 16 strong regions called *województwo* (voivodship). The best performing region is Mazowieckie, where the capital is situated. The second position is taken by Małopolskie with Cracow, the third – Wielkopolskie with Poznan, followed by Dolnośląskie with Wrocław. The Łódzkie region occupies the fifth position with 10 higher education institutions involved in Erasmus student mobility for studies. Altogether, 786 students from this region participated in studies abroad in the framework of Erasmus in 2009/10. These statistics concern students enrolled in universities situated in a given region, not necessarily its permanent inhabitants.

Polish Erasmus students tend to choose Germany (1756) and Spain (1753) as their host countries for student mobility (Fig. 6.19). The third most popular destination country for Polish Erasmus students is France (1073), followed by Italy (1025) and Portugal (814). Several factors may be relevant in explaining this pattern of mobility of Polish Erasmus students going for partial studies abroad. First of all, the size of the host country and the number of potential partner universities, language, geographical attractiveness (including climate and tourist attractions) and proximity (low distance, good transport links) as well as, last but not least, the price level in the host country.

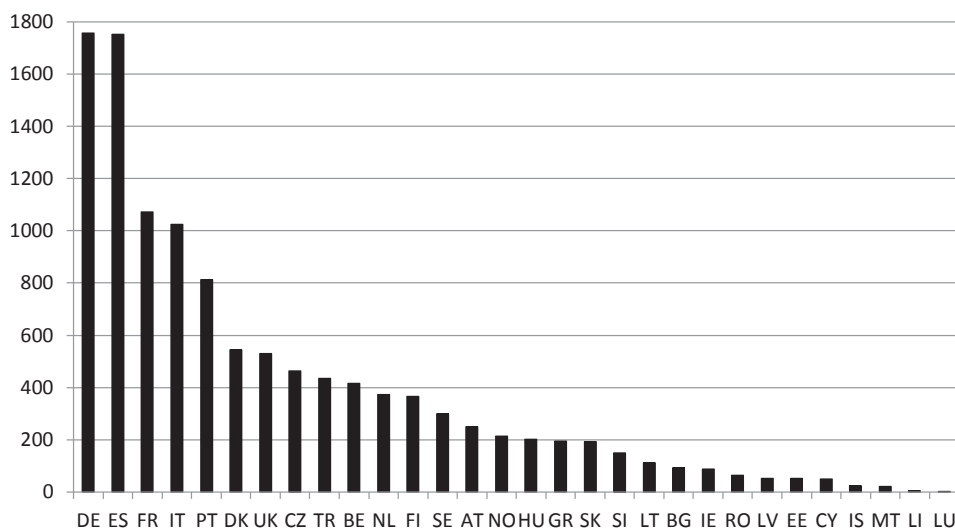


Figure 6.19. Polish outgoing Erasmus students for studies by host country (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 39

Table 6.12. Top 10 European universities regarding the number of Polish Erasmus students admitted for studies in 2009/10

Rank	University	Erasmus code	Country	Polish students
1	Universidad Politecnica de Valencia	E VALENCI02	Spain	168
2	Univerzita Karlova v Praze	CZ PRAHA07	Czech Rep	122
3	Universitat de Valencia	E VALENCI01	Spain	107
4-5	Koebenhavns Universitet	DK KOBENHA01	Denmark	102
4-5	Via University College	DK RISSKOV06	Denmark	102
6	Universidad de Granada	E GRANADA01	Spain	97
7	Univerza v Ljubljani	SI LJUBLJA01	Slovenia	94
8	Universita degli Studi di Bari	I BARI01	Italy	93
9	Universidade da Beira Interior	P COVILHA01	Portugal	91
10	Universidade de Vigo	E VIGO01	Spain	73

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 39.

The most popular host universities for Polish Erasmus students are situated in Spain (4 in top 10), Denmark (2), Czech Republic (1), Slovenia (1), Italy (1), and Portugal (1) (Tab. 6.12). In 2009/10, as many as 168 Polish Erasmus students were admitted at the Technical University of Valencia in Spain. The second most popular was the Czech Charles University of Prague with 122 Polish Erasmus students, followed by the University of Valencia in Spain hosting 107 Polish Erasmus students, the Copenhagen University in Denmark (102) and the Via University College (102).

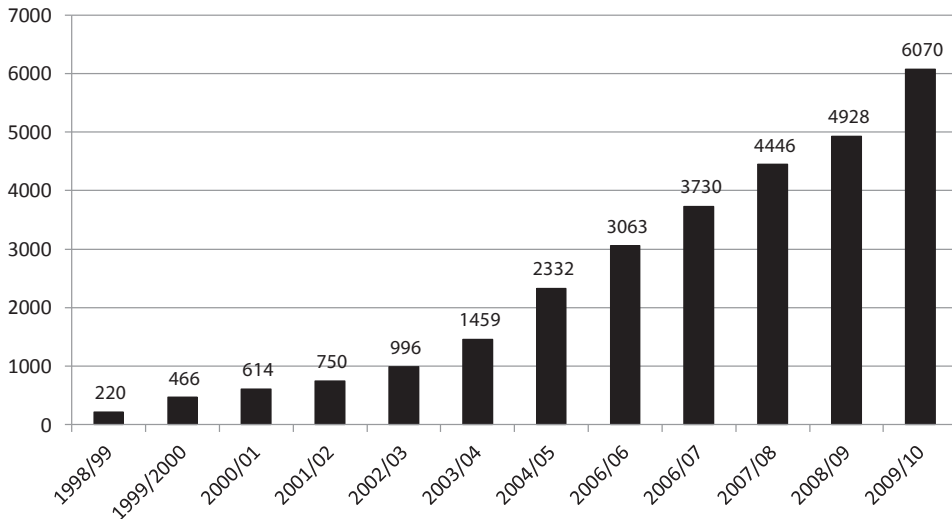


Figure 6.20. Evolution of the total number of incoming Erasmus students in Poland (1998/99-2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 47

From the beginning of Erasmus programme implementation in Poland until the academic year 2009/10, i.e. that for which we have the latest available data, more than 29,000 foreign students arrived in Poland in the framework of Erasmus. 27,827 of them came for their student mobility for studies, whereas 1244 participated in student mobility for placements. The trend concerning the number of Erasmus incoming students in Poland is clearly increasing with an impressive dynamic (Fig. 6.20).

Poland does not have a balanced exchange of Erasmus students, but the proportion of incoming to outgoing Erasmus students is steadily improving (Tab. 6.13). The incoming to outgoing students rate rose from 15.4% in 1998/99 to 43.3% in 2009/10, which means that the exchange is becoming more and more balanced, though Poland still admits far fewer Erasmus students than it sends. There are more than twice outgoing Erasmus students in Poland than their incoming counterparts.

Table 6.13. Evolution of the net result of Erasmus student exchange in Poland (from 1998/99 to 2009/10)

Academic year	Outgoing Erasmus students	Incoming Erasmus students	Difference (outgoing – incoming)	Incoming to outgoing students rate (%)
1	2	3	4	5
1998/99	1,426	220	1,206	15.4
1999/2000	2,813	466	2,347	16.6

Table 6.13. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5
2000/01	3,691	614	3,077	16.6
2001/02	4,322	750	3,572	17.3
2002/03	5,419	996	4,423	18.4
2003/04	6,278	1,459	4,819	23.2
2004/05	8,388	2,332	6,056	27.8
2005/06	9,974	3,063	6,911	30.7
2006/07	11,219	3,730	7,489	33.2
2007/08	12,854	4,446	8,408	34.6
2008/09	13,402	4,928	8,474	36.8
2009/10	14,021	6,070	7,951	43.3
Total	93,807	29,074	64,733	31.0

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 49.

In 2009/10, Poland had a positive balance of Erasmus student mobility at the level of almost 8,000 students. It is worth investigating which partner countries account for this result to the largest extent. It turns out that Poland had a surplus of Erasmus mobility with 26 partner countries and a deficit with only 5 countries (Fig. 6.21, Tab. 14). The highest difference between Polish outgoing and incoming students was observed in Germany (almost 1500), Spain, Italy, UK, France, and Denmark. Meanwhile, a negative balance was observed for Turkey, Lithuania, Romania, Croatia, and Luxembourg, with Turkey accounting for a bulk of this kind of imbalance, as almost 700 more students came to Poland from Turkey within Erasmus than went the other way round.

In relative terms, the greatest proportion of incoming to outgoing Polish Erasmus students was observed for Turkey, where almost 2.5 times more students were sent to Poland than admitted from Poland in 2009/10 (Fig. 6.22, Tab. 6.14). At the other extreme, there are such countries as Cyprus and Liechtenstein, which did not send any Erasmus students to Poland. Norway admitted 14 times more Polish Erasmus students than it sent to Poland. Very high relative imbalances were also reported for Malta, Denmark, and Ireland. For the UK, this ratio was also very significant, as Poland sent to the UK 10 times more Erasmus students than it received. As many as 17 partner countries sent to Poland below half of Erasmus students they admitted from Poland.

Table 6.14. The net result of Erasmus student exchange in Poland by partner country (2009/10)

Country	Symbol	Polish outgoing students	Incoming students in Poland	Difference (outgoing – incoming)	Incoming / outgoing ratio (%)
Austria	AT	293	61	232	20.8
Belgium	BE	468	98	370	20.9
Bulgaria	BG	121	97	24	80.2
Croatia	HR	0	13	-13	x
Cyprus	CY	62	0	62	0
Czech Republic	CZ	516	144	372	27.9
Denmark	DK	577	36	541	6.2
Estonia	EE	54	10	44	18.5
Finland	FI	390	41	349	10.5
France	FR	1,226	656	570	53.5
Germany	DE	2,129	676	1,453	31.8
Greece	GR	487	89	398	18.3
Hungary	HU	233	124	109	53.2
Iceland	IS	30	4	26	13.3
Ireland	IE	127	12	115	9.4
Italy	IT	1,208	363	845	30.0
Latvia	LV	71	62	9	87.3
Liechtenstein	LI	6	0	6	0
Lithuania	LT	122	146	-24	119.7
Luxembourg	LU	2	4	-2	200.0
Malta	MT	57	3	54	5.3
Netherlands	NL	456	85	371	18.6
Norway	NO	264	11	253	4.2
Portugal	PT	922	520	402	56.4
Romania	RO	66	81	-15	122.7
Slovakia	SK	219	110	109	50.2
Slovenia	SI	167	39	128	23.4
Spain	ES	2,164	1,312	852	60.6
Sweden	SE	332	37	295	11.1
Turkey	TR	470	1,156	-686	246.0
United Kingdom	UK	782	80	702	10.2
Total	x	14,021	6,070	7,951	43.3

Source: own calculations on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 30–31 and 47–48.

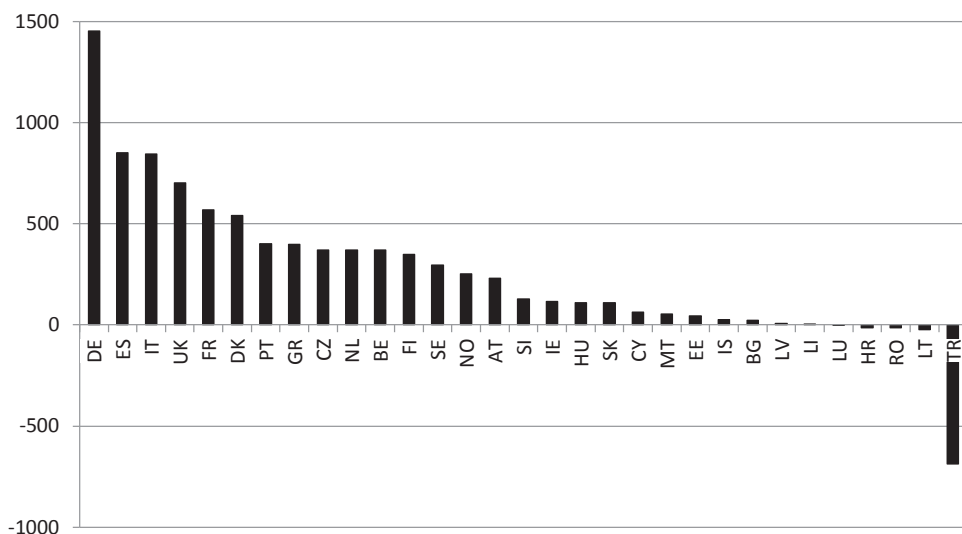


Figure 6.21. Net result of Erasmus student mobility in Poland by partner country (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Człokowska-Naumiuk 2011: 30–31 and 47–48

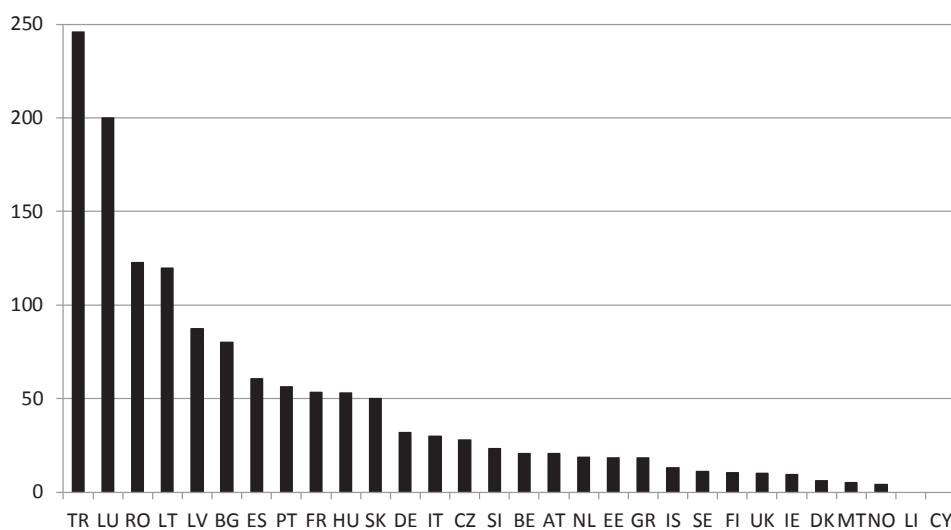


Figure 6.22. Incoming to outgoing Erasmus students in Poland by partner country (2009/10) (%)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Człokowska-Naumiuk 2011: 30–31 and 47–48

Poland admits Erasmus students for studies from all over Europe, with Spain (1204 incoming students in Poland in 2009/10) and Turkey (1119) as the principal home countries (Fig. 6.23). These biggest source countries are followed by France (584), Germany (582), and Portugal (493).



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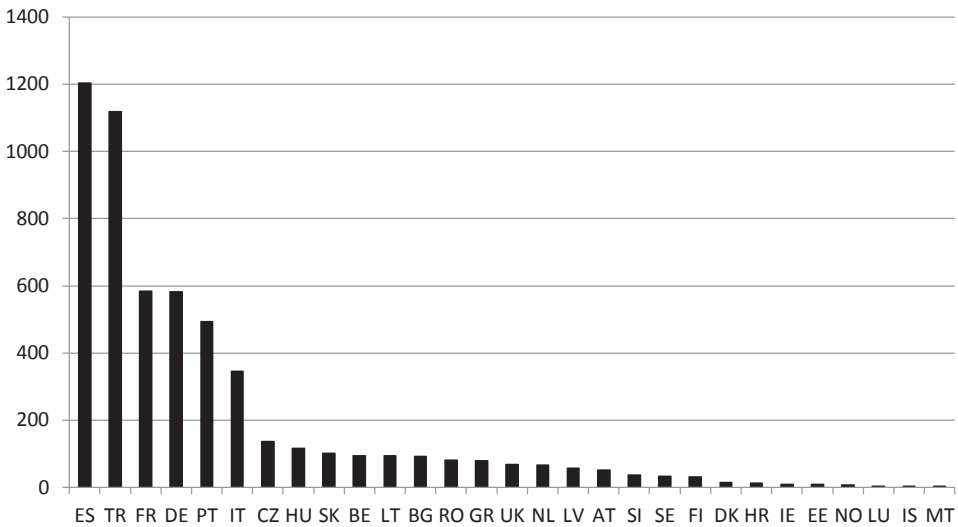


Figure 6.23. Incoming Erasmus students for studies in Poland by home country (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 50

Table 6.15. Top 10 Polish Universities in terms of the number of incoming Erasmus students in 2009/10

Rank	University	Erasmus code	Received Erasmus students
1	Jagiellonian University of Cracow	PL KRAKOW01	512
2	University of Warsaw	PL WARSZAW01	439
3	Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan	PL POZNAN01	224
4	University of Wroclaw	PL WROCLAW01	219
5	Technical University of Warsaw	PL WARSZAW02	194
6	Warsaw University of Economics	PL WARSZAW03	172
7	Technical University of Lodz	PL LODZ02	153
8	Technical University of Wroclaw	PL WROCLAW02	149
9	University of Lodz	PL LODZ01	135
10	Krakow University of Economics	PL KRAKOW04	134

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 51.

Not surprisingly, the biggest public Polish universities attract the highest numbers of incoming Erasmus students for studies (Tab. 6.15). The most popular Polish university among foreign Erasmus students is the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. It has the most ancient academic tradition in Poland, with a 650-year history. It is also located in the most historic city of Poland, its ancient capital, with many tourist attractions and a thriving cultural life. The second position is taken by the biggest Polish university, which is located in the current capital.

These ‘superpowers’ are followed by regional universities, like the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan, which is the strongest in the Wielkopolskie region, and the University of Wroclaw, the leader in the Dolnośląskie region. In the top 10, there are also 3 technical universities and 2 universities of economics, in addition to the 5 general universities. The University of Lodz occupied the 9<sup>th</sup> position in 2009/10 with 135 incoming Erasmus students.

In 2009/10, 2408 Polish students participated in Erasmus mobility for placements, which constituted 6.8% of all European students engaged in this kind of mobility. Their average stay lasted 3 months and 11 days and they received a grant of 468 EUR per month on average, which was higher than the European average of 386 EUR.

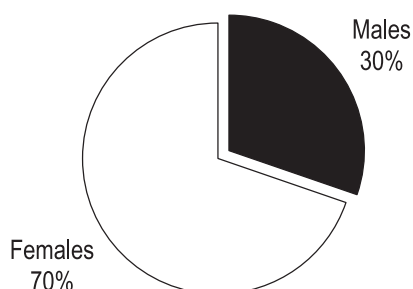


Figure 6.24. Structure of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements by sex (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 42

The gender structure of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements is the same as for studies (Fig. 6.24). Females largely prevail compared to males.

Polish students who go for an Erasmus placement abroad are usually at the Master level (56%). 2/5 of the Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements are Bachelor students, and 3% – doctoral students (Fig. 6.25). This structure by the level of studies is slightly different than the one for mobility for studies. Relatively, a little bit more higher level (Master and doctoral) students tend to engage in mobility for placements.

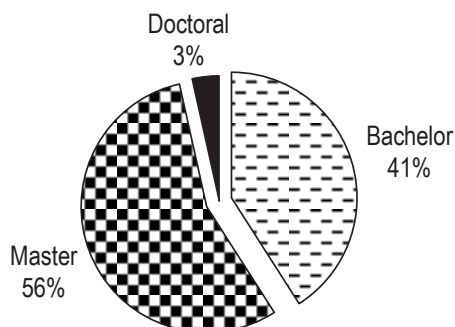


Figure 6.25. Structure of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements by the level of studies (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 42

Almost three quarters of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements attend public universities (Fig. 6.26). Although public higher education institutions tend to prevail over their non-public competitors in this statistic, their advantage is not so overwhelming as for the outward mobility for studies. In 2009/10, 74 public and 59 non-public universities sent their students for Erasmus placements abroad. This kind of mobility accounted for 14% of all Erasmus student outward mobility in public universities and as much as 41.5% in private universities.

It is interesting to look at the ranking of Polish universities sending the highest number of Erasmus students for placements (Tab. 6.16). This time the leader is not a general public university, but a private higher education institution specialising in tourism, hotel management and restaurant services. The second position is taken by the University of Warsaw, followed by the Technical University of Wroclaw and the general University of Wroclaw. As Wroclaw is located close to the Western border of Poland, the geographical proximity to German enterprises may play a role in shaping this pattern of mobility. The University of Lodz occupied the 6<sup>th</sup> position together with the Silesian University of Katowice, with 59 outgoing students for Erasmus placements.

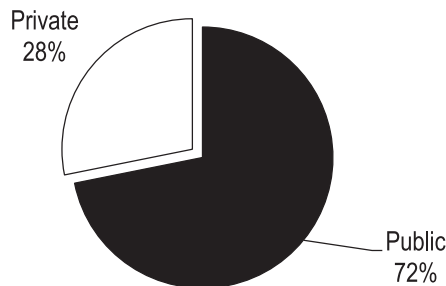


Figure 6.26. Structure of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements by university type (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 44

Table 6.16. Top 10 Polish universities regarding the number of outgoing Erasmus students for placements in 2009/10

Rank	University	Erasmus code	Outgoing Erasmus students for placements
1	2	3	4
1	Higher School of Hotel and Gastronomical Studies	PL POZNAN10	190
2	University of Warsaw	PL WARSZAW01	138
3	Technical University of Wroclaw	PL WROCLAW02	126
4	University of Wroclaw	PL WROCLAW01	123
5	Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan	PL POZNAN01	76

Table 6.16. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
6-7	Silesian University of Katowice	PL KATOWIC01	59
6-7	University of Lodz	PL LODZ01	59
8-9	Jagiellonian University of Cracow	PL KRAKOW01	55
8-9	Medical University of Wroclaw	PL WROCLAW05	55
10	Nicolas Copernicus University of Torun	PL TORUN01	53

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 42.

Regarding the regional distribution of Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements (Tab. 6.17), it is not the capital region that scores the highest unlike the situation concerning student mobility for studies. In fact, it is the Wielkopolskie voivodship (with Poznan as its centre) that sent the highest number of students for Erasmus placements, followed by Dolnośląskie (with Wroclaw). Mazowieckie, the capital of which is also the capital of the whole country, took the third position, whereas Łódzkie was the 7<sup>th</sup> out of 16 Polish regions.

Table 6.17. The regional statistics concerning Erasmus outward student mobility for placements in Poland in 2009/10

Rank	Region ( <i>Województwo</i> )	No. of universities organising mobility	Number of outgoing Erasmus students for placements
1	Wielkopolskie	17	426
2	Dolnośląskie	13	393
3	Mazowieckie	24	353
4	Małopolskie	13	231
5	Śląskie	13	200
6	Lubelskie	10	155
7	Łódzkie	5	133
8	Pomorskie	11	98
9	Świętokrzyskie	4	74
10	Zachodniopomorskie	5	73
11	Kujawsko-pomorskie	3	59
12	Podkarpackie	5	57
13	Warmińsko-mazurskie	3	52
14	Podlaskie	4	46
15	Opolskie	2	43
16	Lubuskie	1	15

Source: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 43.

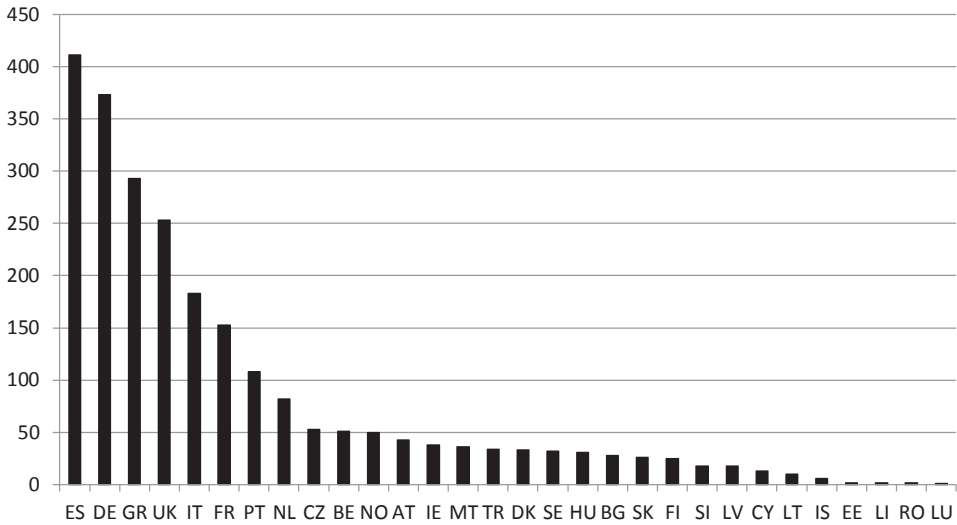


Figure 6.27. Polish outgoing Erasmus students for placements by host country (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 46

Polish students choose Spain, Germany, Greece, and the UK, as their major host countries for Erasmus placements (Fig. 6.27). Attractive weather conditions seem to play an important role in their selection process. Other factors taken into account would be: language (especially for the UK) and geographical proximity (for Germany).

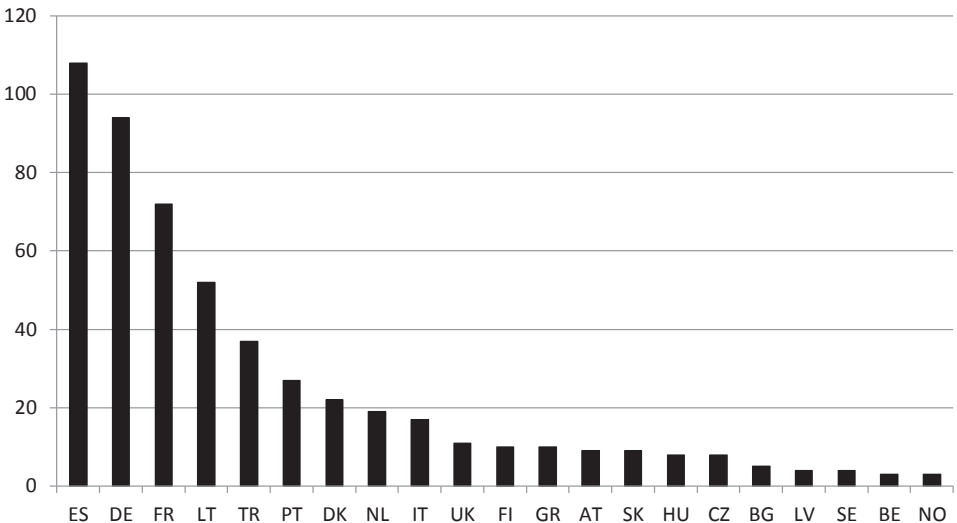


Figure 6.28. Incoming Erasmus students for placements in Poland by home country (2009/10)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: Członkowska-Naumiuk 2011: 54

Poland attracted Erasmus students for placements mainly from Spain, Germany, France, Lithuania, and Turkey (Fig. 6.28). Possible explanations of this pattern of inward mobility for placements may concern the presence of subsidiaries of multinational companies whose headquarters are located in the home country, relatively low costs of living in Poland, and geographical proximity (for Germany and Lithuania).

#### 6.4. UNIVERSITY OF LODZ STATISTICS

There are 42,927 students at the University of Lodz (as of 30.11.2011), including 28,901 full-time students (67.3%) and 14,026 part-time students (32.7%). They follow 40 fields of studies encompassing 167 specialisations. There are also 1,305 doctoral students (1,161 full-time and 144 part-time), and 2,761 post-graduate students (i.e. those who, as a rule, have completed their Master studies and follow an additional programme, usually being employed) (University of Lodz 2012b). In 2010 (as of 30 November), there were 28,646 female students at the University of Lodz, out of 42,945 of all students (66.7%). First-cycle students amounted to 28,362 (66.0% of all University of Lodz students). 11,322 were enrolled in second-cycle programmes (26.4%), and 3,261 completed the last year of studies without passing the diploma exams (7.6%) (Central Statistical Office 2011: 122–123).

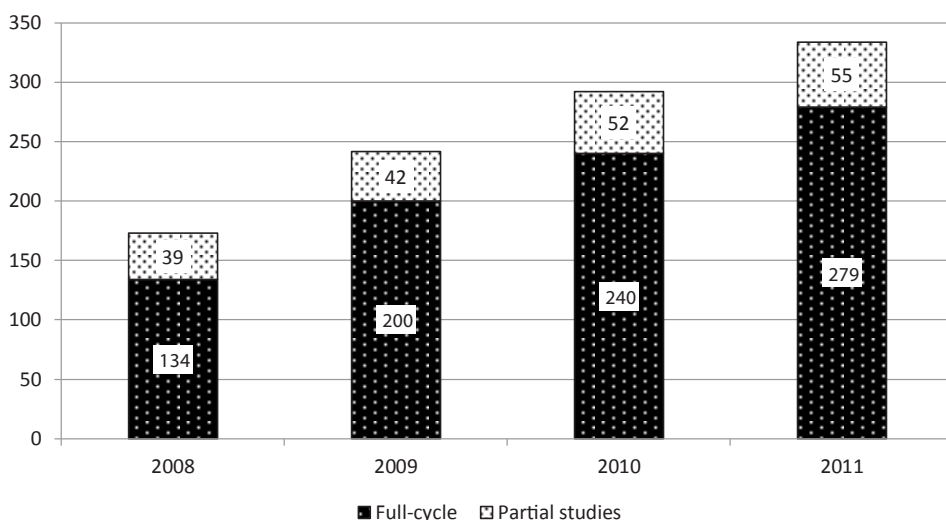


Figure 6.29. Evolution of the total number of foreign students at the University of Lodz (excluding Erasmus) (2008–2011)

Source: own graph on the basis of: University of Lodz 2012b: 30

There were 334 foreign students at the University of Lodz in 2011, excluding Erasmus students. 279 of them (83.5%) followed full-cycle programmes and 55 (16.5%) had a part of their studies here (in the framework of Erasmus Mundus, Campus Europae, CEEPUS, DAAD, bilateral agreements, and the offer of the national Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange). We may observe a growing trend in the number of foreign students at the University of Lodz (Fig. 6.29).

Foreign full-cycle students were dispersed throughout the university faculties, with the highest concentration at the faculties of: management, economic and social studies, and international and political studies (Tab. 6.18). However, they constituted only a tiny fraction of the total student population across the faculties.

Table 6.18. Foreign full-cycle students at the University of Lodz by faculty (2011)

Rank	Faculty	Foreign full-cycle students	All full-cycle students
1	Management	58	5,894
2	Economic and Social Studies	48	9,764
3	International and Political Studies	36	1,515
4	Law and Administration	32	6,015
5	Philological Studies	31	4,963
6	Education Studies	19	5,280
7	Geographical Studies	17	1,751
8	Mathematics and Computer Science	16	1,785
9	Biology and Environmental Protection	11	1,629
10	Physics and Applied Computer Science	4	558
11	Philosophy and History	3	1,792
12–13	Chemistry	2	607
12–13	Branch in Tomaszów Mazowiecki	2	912
Total		279	42,927

Source: University of Lodz 2012b: 17–18 and 31.

The Erasmus programme has been implemented at the University of Lodz for 14 years. Until the academic year 2010/11, 3,796 outgoing students benefited from the mobility for studies and 178 from the mobility for placements. In the same period of time, the University of Lodz has admitted 986 incoming Erasmus students (Wysokińska 2012). As far as Erasmus student mobility at the University of Lodz is concerned, we can observe a rising trend over time since the beginning of the implementation process, albeit with some year-to-year fluctuations.

In the academic year 2010/11, there were 429 outgoing Erasmus students for studies at the University of Lodz, including 327 females, i.e. over  $\frac{3}{4}$  (Fig. 6.30). This proportion of females was higher than in the population of all Polish outgoing Erasmus students and higher than in the population of all University of Lodz students, which suggests that female students tend to be more mobile internationally than their male colleagues.

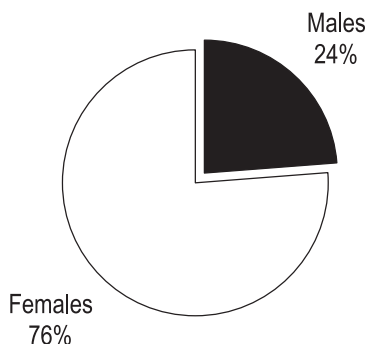


Figure 6.30. Structure of University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies by sex (2010/11)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: University of Lodz 2011

There were 256 first-cycle (Bachelor-level) outgoing Erasmus students at the University of Lodz, 167 second-cycle (Master-level), and 6 doctoral students (Fig. 6.31). The share of Bachelor outgoing Erasmus students at the University of Lodz was higher than in the entire population of Polish outgoing Erasmus students, but lower than in the entire population of University of Lodz students.

The majority of outgoing Erasmus students for studies at the University of Lodz are 22–23 years old (Tab. 6.19).

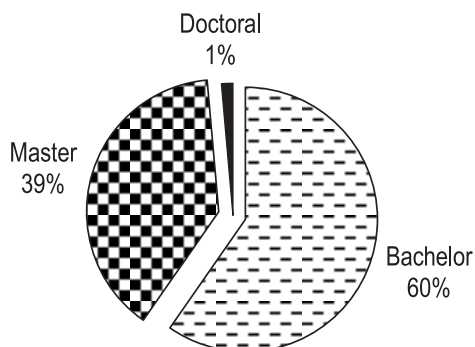


Figure 6.31. Structure of University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies by the level of studies (2010/11)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: University of Lodz 2011



Table 6.19. University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies by age (2010/11)

Age	Outgoing Erasmus students	
	Total	%
≤ 18	0	0
19	1	0.23
20	26	6.06
21	67	15.62
22	128	29.84
23	121	28.21
24	56	13.05
25	13	3.03
26	8	1.86
27	3	0.70
28	4	0.93
29	1	0.23
≥ 30	1	0.23
Total	429	100.00

Source: own calculations on the basis of: University of Lodz 2011.

Table 6.20. University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies by the field of studies (2009/10)

Rank	Subject area code	Field of studies	Outgoing Erasmus students	
			Total	%
1	2	3	4	5
1	34 (04.0)	Business and administration	59	15.28
2	222 (09.2)	Foreign languages	52	13.47
3	313 (14.1)	Political science and civics	38	9.84
4	314 (14.3)	Economics	37	9.59
5	38 (10.0)	Law	36	9.33
6	223 (09.1)	Mother tongue	28	7.25
7	312 (14.2)	Sociology and cultural studies	14	3.63
8–9	32 (15.0)	Journalism and information	13	3.37
8–9	443 (07.2)	Earth science	13	3.37
10–11	311 (14.4)	Psychology	10	2.59
10–11	319 (14.9)	Social and behavioural science (others)	10	2.59
12	31 (14.0)	Social and behavioural science	9	2.33

Table 6.20. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5
13–14	22 (08.0)	Humanities	8	2.07
13–14	229 (08.9)	Humanities (others)	8	2.07
15	46 (11.0)	Mathematics and statistics	7	1.81
16–17	14 (05.0)	Teacher training and education science	6	1.55
16–17	762 (14.5)	Social work and counselling	6	1.55
18–19	212 (03.3)	Music and performing arts	5	1.30
18–19	321 (15.1)	Journalism and reporting	5	1.30
20	481 (11.3)	Computer science	4	1.04
21	442 (13.3)	Chemistry	3	0.78
22–25	140 (05.1)	Teacher training and education science (broad programmes)	2	0.52
22–25	144 (05.5)	Training for teachers at basic levels	2	0.52
22–25	340 (04.1)	Business and administration (broad programmes)	2	0.52
22–25	342 (15.3)	Marketing and advertising	2	0.52
26–32	226 (08.1)	Philosophy and ethics	1	0.26
26–32	329 (15.9)	Journalism and information (others)	1	0.26
26–32	344 (04.3)	Accounting and taxation	1	0.26
26–32	421 (13.0)	Biology and biochemistry	1	0.26
26–32	441 (13.2)	Physics	1	0.26
26–32	850 (07.4)	Environmental protection (broad programmes)	1	0.26
26–32	99 (16.9)	Not known or unspecified	1	0.26
Total			386	100.00

Source: own calculations on the basis of: University of Lodz 2010.

The most popular fields of studies of University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students were: business and administration, foreign languages, political science and civics, economics, and law (Tab. 6.20). As a major general university, the University of Lodz sends Erasmus students in a wide variety of disciplines.

University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students' most popular destination countries were: Germany (58), Spain (56), France (43), Portugal (30), and Finland (26) (Fig. 6.32). Several factors may be relevant in explaining the geographical pattern of outward mobility of University of Lodz Erasmus students, including: language of courses, availability of bilateral agreements, climate, and costs of living.

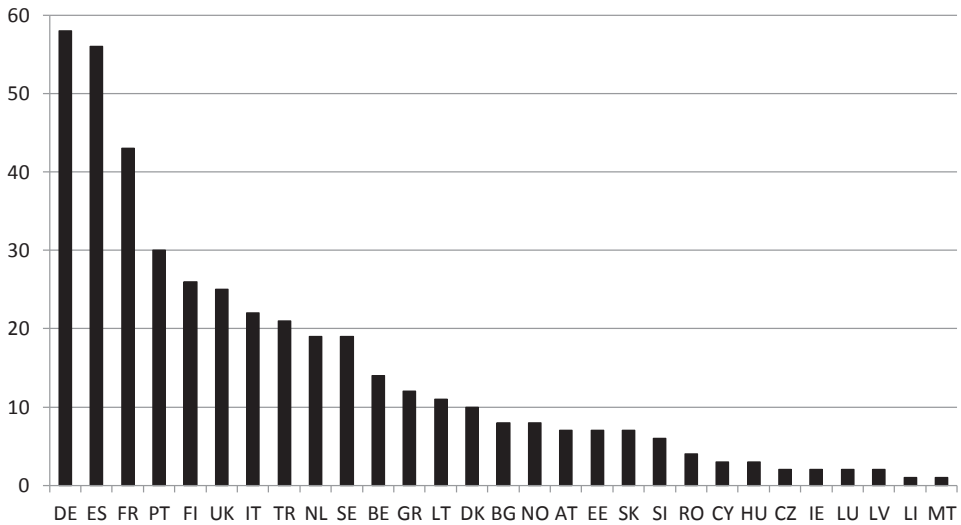


Figure 6.32. University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies by host country (2010/11)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: University of Lodz 2011

Table 6.21. Statistics concerning the length of stay abroad of University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies (2010/11)

Statistic	Value
Mean	6.29
Standard Deviation	2.35
Variance	0.37
Minimum	3
1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile	4.5
Median	5
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	9
Maximum	12

Source: own calculations on the basis of: University of Lodz 2011.

University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students studied abroad for just over 6 months on average, whereas the median duration amounted to 5 months (Tab. 6.21). Most of them participated in a one-semester mobility. The minimum was 3 months and maximum – one year.

On average, they obtained 37.3 ECTS credits, ranging from 0 to 88. The median was 30, which is the standard value for one semester (Tab. 6.22).

Table 6.22. Statistics concerning the number of ECTS credits obtained by University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies (2010/11)

Statistic	Value
Mean	37.28
Standard Deviation	15.73
Variance	0.42
Minimum	0
1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile	26.25
Median	30
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	50
Maximum	88

Source: own calculations on the basis of: University of Lodz 2011.

209 (48.7%) of them were taught host language. 245 (57.1%) followed their courses in English.

Their average Erasmus grant amounted to almost 2150 EUR, ranging from 0 to 5345 EUR, whereas the median was 1800 EUR (for the whole period of Erasmus studies abroad) (Tab. 6.23).

Table 6.23. Statistics concerning the Erasmus grant obtained by University of Lodz outgoing Erasmus students for studies (in EUR) (2010/11)

Statistic	Value
Mean	2,147.67
Standard Deviation	792.92
Variance	0.37
Minimum	0
1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile	1,575
Median	1,800
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	3,055
Maximum	5,345

Source: own calculations on the basis of: University of Lodz 2011.

In 2010/11 at the University of Lodz, there were also 64 outgoing Erasmus students for placements, including as many as 56 females (87.5%). 30 were first-cycle students (46.9%), 31 followed Master studies (48.4%), and 3 were doctoral students (4.7%). The most popular destination countries were: Spain (26), Germany (9), Bulgaria (5), and the UK (5). The average length of placement was 4.1 months, with the majority of 3-month placements. The average total Erasmus grant was 1857 EUR.

Regarding the incoming Erasmus students, the dynamic has been even more impressive than for outgoing students, although in absolute numbers, this group is less than a half compared to their outgoing counterparts.

In the academic year 2011/12, there were 230 incoming Erasmus students at the University of Lodz, including 114 females (Fig. 6.33). The gender structure of incoming Erasmus students shows equal shares of males and females, unlike the structure for outgoing Erasmus students.

University of Lodz tends to attract highest numbers of incoming Erasmus students for studies from Spain (66 in 2011/12), and Turkey (59) (Fig. 6.34).

Incoming Erasmus students most often arrive at the following faculties of the University of Lodz: philological studies (languages), economics and social sciences, management, and international and political studies (Tab. 6.24). The availability of courses in foreign languages, especially English, plays a very important role in shaping this structure of the inward Erasmus mobility.

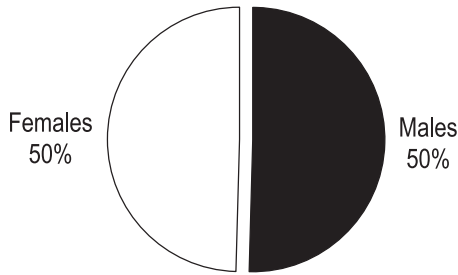


Figure 6.33. Structure of University of Lodz incoming Erasmus students for studies by sex (2011/12)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: University of Lodz 2012a

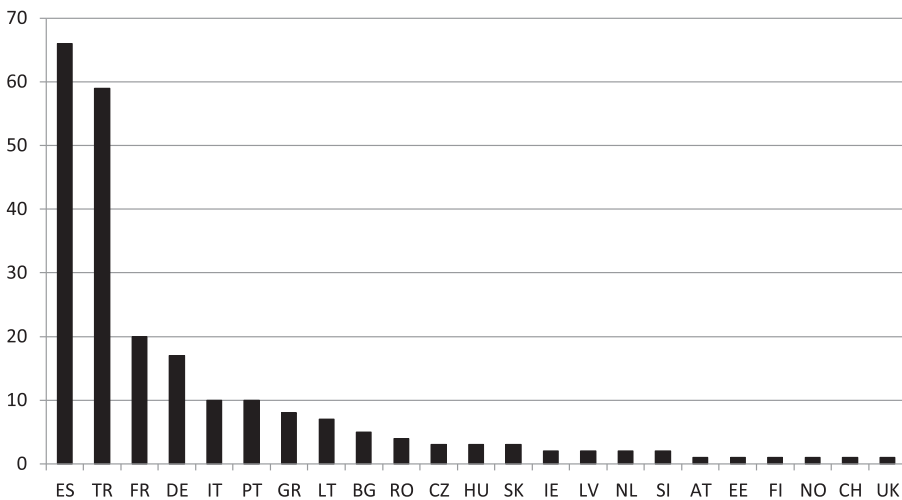


Figure 6.34. University of Lodz incoming Erasmus students for studies by home country (2011/12)  
Source: own graph on the basis of: University of Lodz 2012a

Table 6.24. Incoming Erasmus students at the University of Lodz by faculty (2011/12)

Rank	Faculty	Incoming Erasmus students
1	Philological Studies	58
2	Economics and Social Sciences	49
3	Management	34
4	International and Political Studies	33
5	Law and Administration	24
6	Mathematics and Computer Science	8
7	Physics and Applied Computer Science	6
8–9	Philosophy and History	5
8–9	Biology and Environmental Protection	5
10	Education Studies	4
11	Chemistry	3
Unspecified		1
Total		230

Source: own calculations on the basis of: University of Lodz 2012a.

## 6.5. CONCLUSION

Poland tends to attract more and more foreign students. Their number grew from 5,693 in 1999 to 21,474 in 2010. This positive trend accelerated after Polish accession into the European Union in 2004. Since the academic year 1998/99, when Poland joined the Erasmus programme, we may observe a steady systematic growth of the number of Polish students taking advantage of the opportunity to study abroad. The total number of Polish outgoing Erasmus students (mobility for studies and placements combined) rose tenfold during 11 years of the programme implementation. Poland occupies the 5<sup>th</sup> position in the European Union in terms of the number of outgoing Erasmus students (student mobility for studies). Despite positive changes, Poland ranks at the bottom of the European table with just 0.65% of students participating in Erasmus during the academic year 2009/10, which is well below the European average of 0.94%. Poland attracts much fewer incoming Erasmus students than it sends abroad, but the proportion of incoming to outgoing Erasmus students is steadily improving. 7 out of 10 Polish outgoing Erasmus students are female. Polish Erasmus students tend to choose Germany and Spain as their host countries for student mobility. Poland hosts Erasmus students from all over Europe, with Spain and Turkey as the principal home countries.



## Chapter 7

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IN POLAND – A LITERATURE REVIEW ON TENDENCIES, MOTIVATIONS, AND OBSTACLES

#### 7.1. STUDENT MOBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: TENDENCIES AND MOTIVATIONS

Teichler et al. (2011: 27–28) provide some interesting terminological insights regarding student mobility. They distinguish foreign students from study abroad students. The former category concerns students with a nationality different from that of the country of study, whereas the latter means national students enrolled, towards a degree/diploma, abroad. These students are *not* necessarily *outgoing students*, i.e. they need not have been mobile for the purpose of study. More precisely, they may have resided in the foreign country or completed prior education in the latter, already before starting higher education study there. A *foreign student* in one country is a *study abroad student* from another. *Mobile students* were defined as students who cross national borders for the purpose or in the context of their studies. The opposite of a mobile student is a *non-mobile student*.

As Fig. 7.1 illustrates, different types of temporary study-related experiences abroad are captured in the national Eurostudent surveys, including enrolment abroad/foreign enrolment, internships/work placements, language courses, research stays, summer schools and other study-related experiences abroad (Orr et al. 2011: 166).

While “brain drain” and “brain gain” are well-known concepts, research is showing a more complex picture. International students and researchers are increasingly interested in earning multiple degrees in multiple countries, before perhaps returning to their home countries after 8 to 12 years of international study and work experience. Hence, the emergence of the term “brain train.” These various “brain circulation” concepts present benefits, risks and new challenges for both sending and receiving countries (Knight 2011b: 237).



Saryusz-Wolski and Piotrowska (2011: 54) emphasise the complementary nature of two types of international student mobility: horizontal mobility, also known as credit mobility, temporary mobility, short-term mobility or exchange mobility (i.e. an exchange happening at the same level of studies at home and host universities), and vertical mobility, also called program mobility, degree mobility or diploma mobility (i.e. concerning the enrolment for a subsequent level of studies elsewhere, usually abroad). Horizontal mobility may constitute a good preparation for vertical mobility. The degree mobility is sometimes related to changing the field of studies.

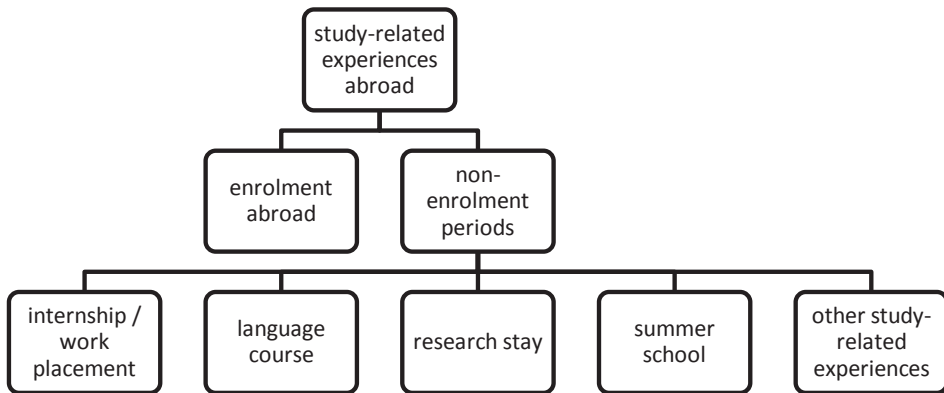


Figure 7.1. Different types of temporary student mobility  
Source: own graph on the basis of Orr et al. 2011: 167

During the last two decades we have witnessed an expansion of higher education in Poland in terms of the absolute number of students as well as the relative share of students in the population of young people. Moreover, the number of higher education institutions expanded very rapidly, and two new types of them appeared: public higher professional schools (*wyższe szkoły zawodowe*) and private universities. Both of them tend to target their education services to candidates with lower academic expectations, who often work and study at the same time (with a few notable exceptions of private universities excelling in academic and research activities). This development of the higher education market slowed down the average pace of internationalisation of Polish universities, as the best achievements in this domain were observed in the traditional big public universities (maybe with the exception of student mobility for placements).

The spectacular growth in the number of students has made higher education in Poland lose its elitist character, especially seeing that this process has not been accompanied by a commensurate increase in expenditure on education and increase in employment of university professors. Moreover, the teaching faculty often worked in both public and private schools at the same time. As a result, the quality of education and research suffered (Macukow 2011: 74).

In the period 1989–2008, the number of foreign students in Poland increased 4 times, but at the same time the total number of students in Poland soared as much as 5 times, which resulted in the declining share of foreign students in the total student population – from 1.1% to 0.8% (Hut, Jaroszewska 2011: 22–25).

Compared to other European countries (the study of Teichler et al. encompassed 27 EU member states plus 4 EFTA members – Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway – and Turkey), the share of foreigners in Polish higher education remains very low. In 2006/07, excluding the atypical example of Liechtenstein, the share of foreign students in total enrolment ranged from 26.9% in Cyprus, 19.5% in the UK, 19.3% and 16.7% in Switzerland and Austria respectively to only 0.6% in Poland, 0.8% in Turkey and 0.9% in Slovakia (Bürger et al. 2011: 39). The ratio of incoming Erasmus students to all foreign students in Poland was 29%, which was much more than the European average of 11% (Ferencz 2011: 102). Therefore, the Erasmus programme plays a relatively more important role in Poland than in other European countries regarding the inward student mobility, although in absolute numbers both indicators for Poland are rather low (i.e. the number of all foreign students and the number of Erasmus incoming students). Spain, Finland, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia all host more Erasmus students than degree-seeking students coming from other Europe–32 countries. This seems to be an indication that Europe–32 students prefer these countries for Erasmus-type of stays (credit mobility) than for degree studies (Ferencz 2011: 100).

As far as study abroad students are concerned, Poland also has a relatively low share of them in all students. The ratio of students with home nationality enrolled abroad to resident students with home nationality amounted to 0.020 in 2006/07, whereas the European average was 0.033. Excluding the very small and highly atypical Liechtenstein, the country with the highest study abroad rate was Cyprus; for every 100 Cypriots studying in their home country, there were 138 Cypriots enrolled abroad. After Cyprus, Iceland (25 out of 100), Ireland (17 out of 100) and Bulgaria (11 out of 100) followed. At the other end, i.e. amongst countries with a very low study abroad rate, the UK provided the most extreme example: for every 1,000 UK nationals studying at home institutions, there were 12 UK students enrolled abroad. Study abroad was almost as rare in Spain, Hungary and Turkey (with 17, 21 and 23 for every 1,000, respectively). In 2006/07, there were more than 3 times more Polish study abroad students (41,896) than foreign students in Poland (13,021), whereas in 32 European countries under study the proportion was converse, i.e. the number of foreign students exceeded the number of study abroad students by a factor of 2.2 (Bürger et al. 2011: 52–62). It needs to be emphasized that Poland is a net exporter in student mobility flows, though the rates of mobility are low compared to other European countries. Polish outgoing Erasmus students constituted 27% of all study abroad students, which was slightly above the European average of 24% (Ferencz 2011: 101).

The Eurostudent surveys conducted nationally present different types of temporary study-related experiences abroad. According to the latest Eurostudent IV research concentrating on students' economic conditions (Orr et al. 2011), between 2008 and 2011 only 2% of Polish students took part in students' exchange programmes. Foreign enrolment rates in Poland are comparatively low. Only 2% of Polish students have been enrolled abroad while in some other countries (e.g. Netherlands) foreign enrolment phases are relatively more popular. The potential foreign enrolment in Poland rate lies at 8%. The survey illustrates that 90% of Polish students are not interested in an enrolment period abroad which may be connected to existing obstacles.

According to Rumbley (2011: 200), mobility incentives may be seen to fall largely into three main categories: financial incentives, curricular incentives, and personal incentives.

OECD (2011: 321–325) emphasized the role of the following underlying factors in students' choice of a country of study: language of instruction, quality of programmes, tuition fees and cost of living, and immigration policy. Students also make their decisions on where to study based on: the academic reputation of particular institutions or programmes; the flexibility of programmes in counting time spent abroad towards degree requirements; recognition of foreign degrees; the limitations of tertiary education in the home country; restrictive university admission policies at home; geographical, trade or historical links between countries; future job opportunities; cultural aspirations; and government policies to facilitate transfer of credits between home and host institutions.

Wächter et al. (2011: 211–214) proposed the following measures to increase the international mobility of students: a) regarding incoming degree mobility: 1) restart marketing Europe as a study destination, 2) boost teaching in widely spoken languages, 3) attract high achievers in critical subject areas, 4) set quantitative targets; b) regarding temporary (credit) intra-European mobility: 1) strengthen Erasmus and maintain its "for all" character, 2) create more mobility windows, 3) set quantitative targets, 4) secure a minimum of mobility to emerging academic and economic leader countries.

The following actions were recommended to attract more foreign students in Poland: 1) promotion of Poland and Polish universities coupled with low costs of studying and living, 2) better preparation of universities to receive foreigners (including administrative services, study materials in English, programmes of studies in English, high quality of studies in English, 3) actions oriented at improving the acceptance of foreigners in the Polish society, 4) changing legal regulations on residence in Poland after completing the studies and on access to the labour market during the mobility, and 5) improvement of the general situation on the Polish labour market (the current unfavourable situation is a push factor for foreign studies in Poland and a factor of lowering interest among potential foreign students) (Hut, Jaroszevska 2011: 22–25).

Poland starts to experience the negative effects of population ageing and a demographic decline. In 2020, the number of potential Polish candidates for university studies will fall to 1 million, which means a 50% decline compared to 2009 (Marchwica 2011: 16). We should also bear in mind that many young citizens will not choose to stay in Poland. Therefore, increasing the number of foreign students in Polish universities will be crucial for their survival and development.

We should also emphasise that Poland acceded to the Erasmus programme rather late compared to its Western European partners, and has been working hard to make up the distance to the best performers. Development of large-scale mobility requires considerable preparation time, including the adoption of the Erasmus university charter, development of administrative capacities, finding foreign partners to sign bilateral agreements, preparing Polish students for outward mobility (including their competence in foreign languages), and incorporating student mobility in the educational systems.

In Poland, apart from international mobility, in particular in the framework of Erasmus, there are also some national student mobility programmes. In 1999, Polish universities established a program of exchange of students among one another (for a semester or two) called MOST (which means 'bridge' in Polish). Technical university students take part in an analogous programme called MOSTECH, and agricultural university students may participate in MostAR. Multiple principles of these programmes resemble Erasmus.

The strategy of higher education development in Poland designed by Ernst & Young (2010: 77–78) stipulates the inclusion of mobility in the organisation of studies. The following actions are recommended: possibility to complete courses lasting one semester at most; correct assignment of ECTS points to courses and possibility of their transfer across study programmes; announcing detailed course descriptions and information on required preparation, rules of getting the final mark and evaluation scales; possibility to conduct a course in English if there are interested students; envisaging 'mobility windows' in study programmes i.e. semesters devoted to national and international student mobility for studies and placements; elaboration of tutoring for incoming national and international students and their adaptation to the principles governing a given university. The strategy contains a proposal that adherence to the Bologna Process principles and evaluation of actions to facilitate mobility should be subject to assessment by an accreditation body.

Polish outgoing Erasmus students report their desire to gain 'European experience' as the main reason for their decision to take part in the programme (Kolanowska 2008a: 84). According to an ESN study (Boomans et al. 2008: 26), Polish students tend to identify themselves with Europe more often compared to their colleagues with other EU Member States. The next motivation relates to culture, as the students mentioned their desire to get to know other countries and cultures, followed by academic considerations. Less popular motivations

included the desire to improve one's preparation for a future job, and to check oneself in a new environment. In the survey results reported in FRSE (2007: 15), Polish outgoing Erasmus students listed the following motivations for their international student mobility: desire to acquire a new European experience (79%), interest in other countries and cultures (55%), academic considerations (courses, teaching methods that are not available at the home university) (51%), desire to prepare oneself better for the future professional career (47%), and a need to test one's ability to cope with a new environment (46%). Having returned from the scholarship, Polish students mentioned the following benefits resulting from their participation in Erasmus: acquiring practical knowledge; developing the capacity and motivation for independent study; learning a foreign language; enhancing prospects for finding a good job; boosting „self-confidence”, building resourcefulness; developing openness to other cultures and tolerance. This was confirmed by the students' essays winning prizes in the competition “Erasmus – what does it mean to me?” and excerpts from other papers winning honourable mentions in the competition (FRSE 2007: 17).

Matkowska (2011: 53–59) enumerates the following motivations of Polish students regarding international mobility: 1) they can gain higher qualifications in their field of interest (sometimes unavailable on national level); 2) they can practise their language competency and improve it; 3) they can get work experience in other cultural environment; 4) they can increase their flexibility and, consequently, be perceived by their future employers as persons who adapt to changes easily; 5) their chances on national and international labour market can increase; 6) they have attended well-informative information/mobility days, educational fairs; 7) other countries offer attractive studies' payment systems (scholarships, discounts, efficient loan system).

Vossensteyn et al. (2010: 9) conducted a survey in 7 European countries aiming to look into financial and other possible barriers that might hinder student participation in Erasmus and to draw conclusions about ways to improve participation. The final sample included 21,145 responses, from which 8,697 responses come from non-Erasmus students and 12,448 responses from Erasmus students. In the survey conducted by Vossensteyn et al. (2010: 80), Polish outgoing students considered the following factors as important or very important reasons for undertaking the Erasmus study period abroad: opportunity to learn/ improve a foreign language (indicated by 95% of respondents); opportunity to live abroad (94%); opportunity to meet new people (92%); opportunity to develop soft skills i.e. adaptability, demonstrating initiative (87%); benefits for one's future employment opportunities in home country (84%); opportunity to experience different learning practices and teaching methods (83%); benefits for one's future employment opportunities abroad (72%); possibility to choose a study programme in a foreign language (72%); opportunity to receive the Erasmus grant (60%); opportunity to choose the institution abroad (60%); guidance provided regarding the benefits

of the Erasmus programme was compelling (55%); quality of the host institution (48%); the length of the study period abroad was appropriate (44%); expected a 'relaxed' academic year abroad (32%); good alignment with the curriculum at home institution (27%); available support in finding accommodation (25%); available support to meet Erasmus administrative requirements (23%); opportunity to receive other financial support to study abroad (19%).

Vossensteyn et al. (2010: 102–103) observed in the qualitative part of their research study that working, studying or travelling toward developing a 'marketable CV' is the overall motivation of students taking part in Erasmus mobility, mainly when the institution of higher education they are going to has a considerable 'reputation'. Taking part in Erasmus in order to 'gain skills', 'practice a language', 'acquire competences in order to improve their employability', 'develop the ability to work in a team' and 'develop the ability to communicate with different cultures' were perceived as some of main motivations for students. Another motivation was 'academic tourism'.

In a study concerning former outgoing Erasmus students from the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the University of Lodz, it turned out that the main motivations for student mobility were as follows: gaining new experiences abroad (indicated by 93.9% of respondents), practical language learning (77.6%), getting to know another culture (67.3%), making acquaintances (53.1%), country of destination (42.9%), living abroad (38.8%), becoming independent (30.6%), academic knowledge (28.6%), better chances for a professional career (26.5%), courses in English (26.5%), fun (24.4%), tourism (22.4%), city of destination (18.4%), curriculum (18.4%), reputation of the host university (16.3%), opinions of other students (14.3%) (Bryła 2011: 86).

Erasmus mobility tends to meet the expectations of Polish students, as they evaluate their stay abroad as good or very good (85–90% of students awarded the evaluation of 4 or 5 in the 1-5 scale in the repetitive survey carried out by the national Erasmus agency (Kolanowska 2008a: 84-86). Similarly to the overall evaluation, 85–90% of Polish outgoing Erasmus students assess their benefits stemming from the academic exchange as 4 or 5. Regarding academic aspects of the Erasmus student mobility, the following five points tend to emerge from the large-scale survey (addressed to all Polish participants). First, students highly evaluate the opportunity to get practical knowledge, as education in many partner countries is more oriented at practical aspects than in Poland. Second, the study abroad enables Polish students to adopt a wider perspective, which actually makes them appreciate the quality of previous education in Poland. Third, as teaching is rather practical in nature, students need to learn theoretical issues as their homework, which leads to an improvement in self-learning. Fourth, very well equipped laboratories and libraries encourage the outgoing students to extend their knowledge beyond the required minimum. Fifth, Polish Erasmus students get to know another, less rigid style of studying. For some of them, it may be a trap, whereas

for others it is a valuable lesson of independence, responsibility and self-discipline. Furthermore, Polish outgoing Erasmus students emphasise the benefits related to improving their skills in a foreign language. The number of students assessing their level of a foreign language as very good or good is twice as high as before their departure. The Erasmus mobility influenced in some instances the choice of the topic of the diploma thesis. There is also some (not quantified) evidence that there are Polish Erasmus students who took up an academic career abroad after their student mobility, and others who received another scholarship to continue their studies at the host university or were accepted for a placement in a foreign enterprise.

Official statistics often miss the spiritual or psychological aspects of the international student mobility, which are crucial to the participants. The returning students are more self-confident, independent, entrepreneurial and with no inferiority complexes. Intercultural differences provide an opportunity to practise tolerance and appreciate the strengths of one's own culture. At the same time, mobility enables to discover all the cultural similarities with the host country culture and cultures represented by Erasmus students coming to the host university from other member states. The psychological developments related to the student mobility may be called 'a ritual of transition' (Kolanowska 2008a: 86). Prof. Sławek outlined the cultural background of European integration, mobility and the Erasmus programme itself. He referred to, amongst other things, the famous Polish writer Ryszard Kapuściński's words in *Reporter's Self-Portrait*: "When travelling, we feel that something significant is happening, that we take part in something that we witness and create at the same time, that we have a duty to fulfill, that we are responsible for something. [...] The way itself does matter so much because each step brings us closer to meeting the Other". Prof. Sławek emphasised that the Erasmus programme played a major role in opening up the young generation of Europeans to other cultures, prevented xenophobia and developed their sense of responsibility for dialogue with representatives of other nations (FRSE 2007: 29).

Polish students tend to consider an enrolment abroad as a way to develop personally. 93% of students who have been enrolled abroad believe their expectations are fulfilled at (very) high level. 91% of Polish students agree that their language improved due to foreign enrolment. 84% of students from Poland are satisfied with the quality of education abroad.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them consider social integration as important for an enriching foreign enrolment period (Orr et al. 2011: 198).

The European Commission (2011: 37–41) ordered a survey among representative samples of young people (aged between 15 and 35) living in the 27 EU Member States, as well as in Croatia, Iceland, Norway and Turkey. In total, 30,312 interviews were conducted by Gallup's network of fieldwork organisations. Among benefits of international mobility, Polish respondents emphasized the importance of improved foreign language skills more often than most other surveyed nation-

alities. On the other hand, improved awareness of another culture was reported as the most or second most important benefit of mobility less often in Poland than in other European countries. 23% of Polish respondents mentioned greater adaptation ability as the most important benefit of their international mobility.

According to the research study of Martowska (2011: 155–159), despite an enormous growth in the number of doctoral students in Poland during the systemic transition (i.e. from the end of 1980s – 2,695 in 1990/1991 – to Polish accession into the EU in 2004 – 33,040 in 2004/05), their interest in Erasmus mobility is rather limited and nearly constant over the period 1998–2008 with certain year-to-year fluctuations. However, their gender distribution has changed. Since 2000/2001, female doctoral students participate in mobility more often than their male colleagues.

The Polish agency responsible for managing the Erasmus programme (called the Foundation for the Development of the Education System – *Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji*) conducted a survey among Polish higher education institutions participating in Erasmus in 2007/08. There were 77 responses out of 217 universities to which the survey was addressed, so the response rate amounted to 35.5% (Kolanowska 2008b: 5).

In order to promote the internationalisation of Polish universities in the field of inward student mobility, a number of promotion activities abroad have been reported (Kolanowska 2008b: 10–11). All surveyed universities except one confirmed conducting such activities. The most popular were information and promotion publications in foreign languages (reported by 93.5% Polish universities participating in Erasmus), preparation of an ECTS package/catalogue in a foreign language (89.6%), and taking part in international promotion events (76.6%). Less popular activities included the organisation of international promotion events (14.3%), and the creation of common Internet portals with foreign universities or publishing information about their offer on an external independent website (reported by 11.7%). 74% of the survey participants said that these activities aimed to increase the interest of foreign students and professors to come, and the same share of the study subjects indicated they conducted these activities in the framework of or in relation with their participation in the Erasmus programme. Some notable examples of the aforementioned promotion activities of Polish universities abroad included:

- publications: information brochures/folders/leaflets about the university, Poland, region or city; information guides “I want to study at...” and “Research and Science at...”; “Survival Guides” for foreign students; Erasmus Student Calendar; International Student Guide;
- promotion events with the participation of the university: EAIE fairs, education fairs in various countries (Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, Morocco, India, China, USA), European Higher Education Fairs;



- promotion events organised by Polish universities: International Open Day (when representatives of partner universities are invited), international days organised at the faculty level, a seminar called Enhancing Student Mobility in a Digital World (addressed to universities belonging to the UNICA network), job fairs for foreign corporate partners in the framework of CEMS;

- common information portals: promotion of the university on portals addressed to prospective students from Belarus and Ukraine, presentation of the University on specialised portals (EdMedia), common information portal with other universities belonging to CEMS;

- participation in the “Study in Poland” project and regional consortiums;

- collaboration in international thematic networks and university co-operation networks (Compostela Group, UNICA, CEMS, Santander Group, European Society for Research on the Education of Adults);

- promotion through participation in Erasmus Mundus projects (involving the improvement of attractiveness of the education offer);

- promotion in the framework of contacts with partner cities, municipalities or regions or branch organisations (e.g. tourism);

- applying for international quality certificates (European Language Label, Council of Europe certificates, US Department of Education certificates conferring eligibility in the Federal Student Financial Aid Program);

- participation in “Financial Times” rankings;

- preparation of the university website in a foreign language, CDs or films;

- meeting partner university students by professors participating in outgoing teaching mobility;

- setting up joint study programmes with foreign universities;

- organising cultural and academic events in co-operation with foreign embassies;

- awarding honour titles to foreign professors;

- participation of students in ESN conferences;

- distribution of promotion gadgets.

Marchwica (2011: 15–16) claims that the main strength of Poland is the high academic level of most of its universities. However, certain processes increase its attractiveness. For instance, the teaching process may be made more attractive by new ways of presenting content, involving students to conduct experiments and other kind of research, making tutorial groups more active, replacing demonstration methods with problem-solving methods. Construction and modernisation of teaching facilities contributes to a positive evaluation of Polish universities by foreigners. Last but not least, the costs of living in Poland is still relatively low, especially when student support systems are utilised (student restaurants and residences etc.).

In the study of Saryusz-Wolski et al. (2003: 17), 100 incoming Erasmus students in Poland were surveyed. It is one of the first studies on this topic in Poland, conducted in the academic year 2001/2 at a private higher education institution

in Lodz. The most important motivation to come to study in Poland was their willingness to get to know a new culture. Most of the respondents who reported this motivation did not say that they wanted to get to know specifically Poland and its culture, but rather some other culture than their own, no matter which. There were also a few respondents who mentioned their Polish origin as the reason for their Erasmus mobility in Poland. However, as this study was carried out a decade ago, its results cannot be extrapolated directly to the current situation. For instance, the offer of courses in foreign languages has expanded exponentially since that time (the respondents complained about their shortage then).

In the 2005 ESN study, 223 incoming students in Poland completed the survey, out of which 162 were Erasmus students (Krupnik, Krzaklewska 2006: 10–22). The methodology resembled customer satisfaction research studies, as students were treated as consumers, while universities and student organisations as service providers. The mean age of respondents was 23.5 years. 61% of the respondents were female. The most popular fields of studies belonged to the areas of business (28%), technical studies (17%) and social sciences (11%). Comparing to other European countries, Poland tends to attract relatively fewer foreign students studying languages, which may be related to the less popular nature of the Polish language. The average length of stay amounted to 6.5 months. The surveyed students carried out their mobility in major Polish cities: 38% in Cracow (especially the Jagiellonian University of Cracow and the Cracow University of Economics), 20% in Warsaw, followed by Wroclaw (9%), Poznan (8%), Katowice (6%), and Gdansk (6%). 78% of the respondents came from Western Europe (the most important home countries being Spain, Italy, Germany, Sweden, and France), and 22% from Central and Eastern Europe. The incoming students usually had middle-income families: 69% reported that their family has an income comparable to their country's average, 24% higher, and 7% lower. Comparing to incoming students in other European countries, Poland tends to attract students from less affluent families. The average study abroad grant amounted to 230 EUR per month. Only 13% of the incoming students evaluated their grant as sufficient to cover almost all costs related to the mobility, for 11% it covered most expenses, for 12% half of them, for 21% less than a half, and 40% indicated that the grant covered only a small fraction of their expenses. 30% of the incoming students in Poland had both parents with tertiary education, 16% had only the father with higher education, 12% only the mother, and 43% had neither parent with tertiary education. The respondents were asked to choose maximum 3 out of 11 reasons they decided to study abroad. The most popular motivations were not strictly academic, but related to one's own development. They included: improvement of one's competence in a foreign language (52% of responses), acquisition of new experiences (52%), and getting to know other cultures (40%). The remaining motivations were as follows: improvement of one's knowledge (31%), spending a long period of time in some other country (29%), getting to know new people (26%),

studying in a different academic environment (17%), increasing one's chances on the labour market (14%), enjoying oneself (12%), and being independent (4%). In spite of the fact that none respondent mentioned personal development as their motivation, the majority of respondents indicated that this was the most important benefit stemming from their international mobility.

In a study by the University of Warsaw carried out in 2009 (Hut, Jaroszevska 2011: 15–16) encompassing 256 incoming students, the main motivation of the respondents was low costs of living in Poland and easy access to studies. The second motive was particularly relevant for medical faculty students, whereas the first motive was most important for technical university students. Only for foreign students having a Polish origin and those who chose social studies and humanities (which often meant the same group of students), other factors played a significant role, like the willingness to get to know Poland and Polish language. Foreign students evaluated their studies in Poland very positively in general with lower assessments of such aspects as the possibility to find a job during the studies, possibility to stay in Poland after graduating from the university, and the administrative services related to their studies in Poland. Lower satisfaction levels were reported among those foreign students who followed their programmes of studies in English than among those who studied in Polish. Satisfaction levels also differed according to the host university and were probably related to the region of origin of foreign students in Poland. Students of Polish origin and students coming from the Community of Independent States (consisting of most former Soviet Union republics) and American students were most interested in prolonging their stay in Poland, whereas Scandinavian, Asian and African students were least interested. The obtained results were much more favourable than the findings of a similar study conducted in 1997/98 at the University of Warsaw. Then half of foreign students reported they had experienced some kind of aggression in Poland, especially verbal aggression. In the 1998 study only 11% of respondents declared their willingness to stay in Poland, while it was almost a half of respondents in the 2009 study. Those who said they wanted to stay in Poland after completing their mobility mentioned such motives as the possibility to find an attractive job, the desire to continue studying, and their positive emotions toward Poland. A well-paid job was considered the main incentive to stay in Poland by 60% of the surveyed foreign students. Other incentives included: a simplification of legal procedures on residence in Poland (35%), opportunity of professional development (31%), help to find a job from the university (25%), institutional support to find a job (22%), improvement of the attitude of Polish institutions to foreigners (21%), improvement of the attitude of the Polish society to foreigners (20%), and family reasons (2%). The respondents had rather high expectations regarding their future remuneration – over 40% wanted to earn over 1,500 EUR, and only 22% would accept an income below 750 EUR per month, which is the most common situation on the Polish labour market. The lowest income expectations were found among students coming from the Eastern neighbours of Poland.

Poland scores better in rankings showing foreign students' satisfaction with stay by host country than satisfaction with studies. For instance, in the recent ESN survey, in which 8,444 students shared their opinions and experiences about studying or working abroad (Alfranseder et al. 2011: 11, 17–18), Poland got 4.53 mean evaluation of the satisfaction with stay, whereas the average was 4.49, and the result for the satisfaction with studies was 3.99, which was below average (4.06). In terms of satisfaction with stay, Poland performed better than Denmark, Germany, Italy, Finland, USA, Turkey, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Ireland, France, Latvia, UK, Belgium, Greece, Norway, and Switzerland. In this ranking, there were few countries that performed better than Poland: Estonia, Portugal, Austria, Sweden, Hungary, Spain, Lithuania, and Canada. Regarding the satisfaction with studies among foreign students, Poland was better than: Belgium, Turkey, Italy, Spain, Latvia, France, Hungary, and Greece, but it was evaluated worse than: USA, Denmark, Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, Canada, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, Estonia, Norway, Finland, UK, and Portugal.

There is a positive impact of internationalisation of Polish universities on the quality of education. Classes are prepared better, discussions are more interesting, new perspectives, experiences and arguments are brought, and global control and evaluation systems are implemented thanks to the development of inward student mobility (Marchwica 2011: 16).

Representatives of Polish universities taking part in the Erasmus programme were asked about their activities aiming to promote international mobility among their own students and/or professors (Kolanowska 2008b: 11). 76.6% confirmed conducting such activities in addition to standard actions mentioned in Erasmus reports. They included publications (48.0%), organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops (44.1%), Erasmus Day (41.6%), and competitions (19.5%). The following examples were provided:

- conferences/seminars/workshops: meetings with former Erasmus students, international days/open doors days, celebrations of Erasmus 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, conferences on mobility, seminars on the recognition of studies abroad in the ECTS system addressed to university authorities and employees, ESN congresses;
- publications: articles in university journals, student bulletins, and newsletters for employees, Erasmus information brochures, annually updated student guides, widely distributed CDs with information on study abroad opportunities, materials on partner universities, articles and interviews in local and national media;
- competitions: organisation of an international competition of essays and artistic works called “Europe is also us. Praise of diversity and respect for differences among people”, photo competition “Discover Europe”;
- promoting Erasmus during an event commemorating the accession of Poland into the EU for city inhabitants;
- obligatory training on scholarship opportunities for all first-year students;
- career days;
- national days with the participation of foreign ambassadors.

Erasmus student mobility is also enhanced by inscribing it in study regulations and other official documents endorsed by Polish universities, including internationalisation strategies.

International mobility of students is only an element of the process of internationalisation of university education. Its scale and quality depends on other elements of this process (including the employment of foreign professors, internationalisation of study programmes, development of joint programmes and joint degrees with foreign partners, research co-operation etc.).

According to Knight (2011b: 233–234), internationalisation has become a formidable force for change, as the following developments and initiatives in higher education demonstrate: development of new international networks and consortia; the growing numbers of students, professors, and researchers participating in academic mobility schemes; increased number of courses, programs, and qualifications that focus on comparative and international themes; more emphasis placed on developing international/intercultural and global competencies; stronger interest in international themes and collaborative research; a growing number of academic programs delivered across borders (e.g. the University of Viadrina in Frankfurt-on-Oder on the German-Polish border); more interest and concern with international and regional rankings of universities; an increase in campus-based extracurricular activities with an international or multicultural component; increased attention given to recruiting foreign students; rising numbers of joint and double degree programs; growth in the number and types of for-profit cross-border education providers; expansion of partnerships, franchises and branch campuses; creation of regional education hubs, education cities and gateways; establishment of new national, regional, and international organizations focused on international education.

Internationalisation of the curriculum involves adaptation of one or more of the following: a) content, e.g. literature, examples, subject matter, language learning; b) methods, e.g. pedagogics, ICT use ('virtual mobility'), peer learning, c) delivery, e.g. language of instruction (as a rule: English) (*Internationalisation...*, 2010: 12).

The importance of the creation of a climate supporting internationalisation of studies is hard to overestimate. It includes rewarding leaders undertaking international initiatives and assuring a better quality of university education in general. It is also worth noting that internationalisation is a cumulative process. Erasmus incoming students return to their home countries and may become ambassadors of their host university and country and thus promote further mobility. Teaching staff mobility enhances the mobility of students. Polish universities started with a narrowly defined internationalisation meaning foreign visits of a relatively small group of professors and students and proceed to internationalisation in its broader meaning, covering large-scale exchange of students and professors, but also profound changes in the study programmes (including the endorsement

of the Bologna process, development of the offer of individual courses and full programmes in foreign languages, especially English, full recognition of the study period abroad with the ECTS), changes in administrative structures and procedures, implementation of common research directions and projects in co-operation with foreign partners, development of international marketing campaigns of the university (both on its own and in broader networks, associations and consortia) etc.

The internationalisation process is also driven by stimuli coming from the labour market, i.e. increasing demand for graduates with high intercultural skills and a perfect knowledge of at least one foreign language. Therefore, the demand for mobility is to some extent derived from the demand for graduates with skills and competencies acquired thanks to student mobility. The expansion of multinational companies and other international business arrangements (including, for instance, international franchising networks) as well as international mobility of workers boost the demand for graduates with skills developed during their student mobility programmes.

## 7.2. OBSTACLES TO STUDENT/ERASMUS MOBILITY

Vossensteyn et al. (2010: 41–42) analysed a variety of potential factors that may hinder or facilitate students' choice to participate in the Erasmus programme and identified five dimensions for potential barriers: financial issues, personal motivation, awareness about the programme, administrative conditions of the Erasmus mobility, and incompatibility between higher education systems. The personal motivation dimension has several aspects: perceived benefits, general pressure for a study abroad experience, language barrier, and personal considerations (e.g. a partner at home, care taking relationships, and employment).

Rumbley (2011: 192) identified the following obstacles to student mobility on the basis of a literature review: 1) a lack of information about mobility opportunities; 2) low motivation levels or little to no personal interest in being mobile; 3) inadequate financial support; 4) foreign language skills deficiencies; 5) a sense of insufficient time or space for an international experience within the framework of an established curriculum or programme of study (for those considering temporary mobility within a degree programme); 6) concerns about the quality of mobility experiences; 7) legal barriers, particularly relating to visa and immigration issues; and 8) problems gaining recognition for academic work completed abroad.

Inward student mobility in Poland is hindered by a shortage of programmes of studies delivered in foreign languages, especially English. A few years ago, only 40% of higher education institutions and 10% of faculties offered full programmes of studies in foreign languages apart from language departments (philological studies) (Kolanowska 2008a: 129). It is worth noting that a significant

proportion of those universities that have implemented such programmes were influenced directly or indirectly by the Erasmus programme (7.8% of all universities, and 3.5% of all faculties). The prevalence of joint programmes of studies with foreign partners is also rather low (reported by 28% of universities and 10% of faculties).

Geographical location of Poland in Central and Eastern Europe may also be a factor preventing some students from choosing it as a country of destination in the framework of international mobility, including Erasmus. This part of Europe used to be an 'unknown land' for many inhabitants of Western Europe (encompassing all the old 15 EU member states in its shape before the latest enlargement) with many unfavourable stereotypes.

Marchwica (2011: 15) identified the following factors blocking an increase in the number of foreign students in Poland and suggested some solution to current problems. First, the legal and economic environment in which Polish universities operate makes the recruitment process too long, and awarding student visas is too cumbersome and time-consuming. And to deny the necessity of security precautions, it seems advisable to simplify and hasten the process so that the candidate could obtain a promise to get a visa in a few weeks so that the recruitment procedure could be closed. Second, there is a need to change legal regulations concerning temporary employment among students. Poland should follow the model of other developed countries. Third, the control of the recruitment process and progress in studies should be changed from pre-emptive to ex post. The system of granting visas should be linked with satisfactory results of studies so that residence permits should be removed from those who treat studies as a cover for other activities. Fourth, there should be enhanced co-operation with various recruitment agencies and interuniversity co-operation. Fifth, the extant systems of information about study opportunities in Poland should be improved, and recruitment procedures facilitated. Sixth, there is a need to establish a system of supporting foreign students both at the stage of recruitment and planning of their stay in Poland as well as during the studies. Such a system has been established for Erasmus students, but the complexity of situation of students from outside the EU requires special actions. Those universities which have implemented such a system notice a substantial increase in the number of foreign students. The system should concern the following issues: verification of documents, control of language proficiency, preparation of a package of practical information (starting from weather description through local transportation and safety issues), help in finding accommodation, explanation of the health care system etc. Finally, seventh, in order to prevent xenophobic reactions, especially in smaller towns, it is necessary to support various student activities aiming to consolidate multicultural populations.

In the *Youth on the move* survey (European Commission 2011c: 45–48), Polish respondents were asked about the reasons they had not spent any time abroad for education, training, working or volunteering. In reply they mentioned most

often that simply they were not interested in going abroad. This answer was less frequent among other nationalities. The second most important reason for not going abroad reported by Polish respondents was a lack of funding or that it was too expensive. This answer was slightly more popular in Poland than on average in Europe. The third most important obstacle to mobility was family commitments, mentioned by 24% of young Poles.

There are numerous obstacles dissuading students from realising a foreign enrolment period. For the majority of Polish students who have not been enrolled abroad the additional financial burden is the most critical obstacle (74%). The separation from the partner, child(ren) and friends is the second big obstacle in case of Poland. 59% of Polish students who have not been enrolled abroad perceive the separation as a big obstacle. Third big obstacle to Polish students to enrol abroad is the perceived lack of language skills (48%). In Poland, for 36% of students who do not have study-related experience abroad, the expected delay in progress of studies is of much greater concern. 35% of students are afraid they will have problems with recognition of results achieved abroad. Some of the Polish students who have not been enrolled abroad (27%) admit they have problems in getting information about mobility opportunities (Orr et al. 2011: 177).

Polish non-mobile students considered the following factors as important or very important reasons for not taking part in Erasmus (Vossensteyn et al. 2000: 87): will take part at a later date (indicated by 51% of respondents); Erasmus grant was insufficient to cover additional costs of period abroad (43%); lack of study programmes in English in hosting institution abroad (37%); expected difficulties with the recognition of credits in my home institution (33%); lack of integration/continuity between study subjects at home and abroad (30%); lack of language skills to follow a course abroad (29%); family reasons or personal relationships (29%); uncertainty about education system abroad (e.g. examinations) (28%); need to delay studies due to the study period abroad (27%); high competition to obtain an Erasmus grant (25%); was not offered my preferred institution abroad (24%); difficulties to find appropriate institution and/or study programme abroad (23%); I would lose part of my income in home country (due to job loss, lack of flexibility of student financing system in my country of study, etc.) (22%); it was not possible to choose the institution abroad myself (21%); lack of support to find accommodation or in other student services abroad (19%); uncertainty about the benefits of the Erasmus period abroad (18%); uncertainty about education quality abroad (18%); decided to study abroad for a full degree at a later date (17%); work responsibilities in my home country of study (17%); lack of information about Erasmus programme and how it works (16%); incompatibility of academic calendar year between my home country of study and abroad (15%); difficulties to meet Erasmus administrative requirements (14%); the study period abroad is too long (12%); applied but was not selected (5%); the study period abroad is too short (5%).



According to the survey results reported by Vossensteyn et al. (2010: 44–45), the financial barrier to participation in Erasmus was particularly strong in Spain followed by Poland (Tab. 7.1). A case study confirmed the overall picture. In Poland in particular, financial concerns were nominated as the main obstacle to participating in the programme, whereas the Spanish case is an interesting example demonstrating that not only the amount of money but also the distribution conditions matter.

Information received by the Parliament of Polish Students (*Parlament Studentów RP*), who in 2010 conducted a survey among students of 80 Polish higher education institutions regarding reasons for low mobility, confirm the main reasons of lack of interest in foreign enrolment presented in Eurostudent survey (Grabek 2011).

Table 7.1. The extent to which students do not consider Erasmus because studying abroad is too costly by country (%)

Opinion	CZ	FI	DE	PL	ES	SE	UK	Mean
Very relevant	37	10	32	42	48	17	27	30
Relevant	29	32	23	28	24	19	27	26
Neutral	17	11	21	11	16	18	16	16
Not relevant	11	16	11	8	5	15	12	11
Not at all relevant	6	31	13	11	7	31	17	17

Source: Vossensteyn 2010: 44.

It is also worth considering the social background of those who perceive (big) obstacles to foreign study. In Poland around 62% of students with low educational background who have not been enrolled abroad would not enrol abroad because of financial insecurities. For 38% students with high educational backgrounds additional financial burden is of much greater concern. Those numbers show that the difference between those two groups is significantly large. When discussing the lack of language competency almost 80% of Polish students with low educational background perceive it as a (big) obstacle to foreign enrolment. In comparison, the share of students with high educational background perceiving this obstacle as big is relatively smaller – around 40% (Orr et al. 2011: 178).

It is also crucial to reflect on possible solutions to overcome obstacles to student mobility. The following measures were considered by Polish non-mobile students as important or very important to stimulate their participation in international mobility (Vossensteyn et al. 2000: 91): increased value of Erasmus grant (indicated by 77% of respondents); flexibility in curriculum (75%); recognition of credits (74%); language learning at higher education (72%); increasing flexibility in student financing system (71%); possibility to choose the university in-

cluding the ones which do not have agreements with the home institution (69%); language learning at secondary education (63%); provide study periods in foreign languages (59%); possibility to undertake Erasmus study period in one year master programmes (58%); increasing attractiveness of the hosting higher education institutions (56%); increase the quality of experiences abroad (55%); possibility to participate in the full degree study programme (53%); compatibility of calendar year (53%); possibility to undertake shorter mobility periods (51%); information on Erasmus programme (45%); information on the benefits of mobility (44%); making the period of studying abroad compulsory (33%).

Despite the positive general evaluation of their Erasmus mobility, Polish students tend to complain about the insufficient level of the Erasmus grant (only 20% evaluated it as 4 or 5, 50% as 3, and the remaining 30% even lower). However, since the number of Polish outgoing Erasmus students continues to grow, it seems that the financial aspect does not play the decisive role (Kolanowska 2008a: 85).

Polish outgoing students tend to complain about financial constraints of their mobility more often than their colleagues from other countries. In the 2010 ESN survey (Alfranseder 2011: 26–27), 20.2% of Polish outgoing students said they felt excluded from student life abroad due to financial constraints (compared to the average of 12.5%). 28.0% said that the grant amount affected their choice of study (compared to 26.1% on average). As many as 17.3% agreed on the statement that it was very difficult to live abroad with the money they had (compared to 9.9% on average). Only one financial indicator was better in Poland than on average in the ESN survey. 10.9% Polish outgoing students reported they worried often or very often about basic living expenses abroad (compared to 11.2% on average). This rather unexpected last finding may be related to the fact that Polish students get relatively more support from their families than their colleagues from Western Europe.

In the survey conducted by Vossensteyn et al. (2010: 76), Polish outgoing students considered the following factors as important or very important difficulties encountered when preparing for the Erasmus study period abroad: Erasmus grant levels are low (indicated by 68% of respondents); uncertainty about the costs of the study abroad (54%); lack of other financial resources needed to study abroad (e.g. because of a need to leave a job, difference in the costs of living, need to take up accommodation outside parental home, etc.) (53%); uncertainty about the Erasmus grant level (44%); lack of integration/continuity between study subjects at home and abroad (36%); expected difficulties with the recognition of credits in my home institution (30%); the study period abroad was too short (30%); difficulties with any other administrative requirements (in home institution or abroad) (26%); lack of support to find accommodation or in other student services abroad (25%); uncertainty about education system abroad (e.g. examinations) (22%); plan to study for a full qualification abroad in the future anyway (19%); lack of study programmes in English in hosting institution abroad (18%);

high competition to obtain an Erasmus grant (17%); lack of possibility of selection of a partner university by the student outside extant Erasmus bilateral agreements of the home university (17%); incompatibility of academic calendar year between my home country of study and abroad (13%); insufficient knowledge of the language of tuition abroad (12%); difficulties to find appropriate institution and/or study programme abroad (11%); uncertainty about education quality abroad (10%); family reasons or personal relationships (10%); work responsibilities in the home country of study (9%); lack of information about Erasmus programme and how it works (8%); uncertainty about the benefits of the Erasmus period abroad (5%); the study period abroad was too long (2%).

One of significant obstacles to Erasmus student mobility is the necessity to pass additional exams after the return from the study period abroad. In the study of Kolanowska (2008b: 21–22), 65.9% of faculty Erasmus co-ordinators indicated that some Erasmus outgoing students needed to take additional exams in Poland after their return, but they did not have to attend these courses, whereas 30.6% of respondents pointed out that certain returning Erasmus students need to not only take additional exams, but also attend the courses in Poland. Even though 87% of Erasmus outgoing students are informed which courses they will have to complete after their return, the mere obligation to fulfil this requirement may be considered an obstacle to Erasmus student mobility. These exams concern those courses that are included in the study programme in Poland and have not been completed abroad. It may happen for various reasons, most often because they are not offered by the partner university, as study programmes are not standardised at the European level. Differences in study programmes were mentioned as the main reason of difficulties with recognising a study period abroad by 75.3% of respondents. The next most important reason was lack of precise information on study programmes provided by the partner university (51.7%). The respondents indicated less frequently too general character of the Learning Agreement (15.3%), the lack of clear decision-making procedures regarding the recognition of the study period abroad at the home university (9.4%), and other reasons (14.1%), including: requirements of certain core subjects to be included in a given study programme required by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (called teaching standards or programme minima), not running a course which had been in the Learning Agreement, delays in sending the Transcript of Records by the foreign partner, failing an exam by the student, the specificity of certain courses, forcing the outgoing Erasmus students to follow courses designed for lower years of studies, and lack of availability of certain courses in a widely known foreign language (the course being delivered only in the local language).

A lack of special language courses for outgoing Erasmus students may constitute an obstacle to student mobility. In the study of Kolanowska (2008b: 12–13), 59.7% of respondents admitted they did not organise such language training.

The following reasons were provided:

- no need for such courses: language courses embedded in standard study programmes are sufficient, outgoing students have a sufficient command of the foreign language, lack of interest among students;
- organisational and financial difficulties: the period between the end of recruitment (May) and departure is too short, difficulties in setting commonly acceptable dates and hours for the training, excessively high costs in relation to low OM grant, which is supposed to cover a number of other organisation and administrative tasks;
- the set-up stage: the courses are planned in future, as the university has just acceded to Erasmus;
- shortage of interested students and those that decide to go abroad for a period of studies; too few outgoing students entails a necessity to conduct these trainings in co-operation with other higher education institutions.

Almost 30% of respondents admitted not providing practical and/or cultural preparation for outgoing students, and 15% did not equip the outgoing students with information materials on the host country (Kolanowska 2008b: 13), which may also constitute obstacles to outward student mobility. The situation may be aggravated by a relatively low prevalence of former Erasmus student association branches, as only 18.2% of Polish universities confirmed they had such an organisation, in particular a branch of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), but also associations called “To be Erasmus”, “Student Cooperation Centre” and “Erasmus Club”.

Ernst & Young (2010: 78) indicated that the organisation of studies based on a rigid assignment of courses to semesters, exams after a few semesters of the same course, and a shortage of information on curricula and exam criteria constituted an important obstacle to mobility. In spite of learning agreements having been signed, there are cases of not recognising the grades and requiring the students to take courses included in the home university programme.

Saryusz-Wolski and Piotrowska (2011) consider the following 3 obstacles to student mobility as the most relevant.

First, there is a lack of appropriate awareness and motivation among university professors. As the university faculty members have a strong impact on shaping the students’ need for mobility, they should not be left out from the analysis. Many of them fail to notice the benefits of international and intercultural experiences in the education process. In spite of the official stance of bodies responsible for international co-operation, many ‘ordinary’ university professors communicate to their students only potential problems related to their mobility, such as: differences in curricula and difficulties to continue the studies after the return from mobility. Low mobility levels among university professors reflect the conviction of numerous members of the faculty that mobility is not necessary for one’s development (Saryusz-Wolski, Piotrowska 2011: 44–45).

Second, the quoted authors (Saryusz-Wolski, Piotrowska 2011: 45–47) emphasise the significance of the lack of information and schemes eliminating students' fears connected with their mobility. There is a lack of information not only concerning organisational issues related to mobility, but also about the benefits of having international experience. It is important to break the stereotype that mobility is targeted only at the best-performing students. Mobility should not be treated as a reward, but rather as a normal and regular element of studies. There is ample evidence that average or poorly performing students at the home university may cope very well abroad. In fact, many of them return after a kind of transformation improving their attitude to learning at the home university. Experiencing different teaching methods makes the student discover more effective paths of learning, acquiring knowledge and competencies, which they transpose to their individual studying mechanism at the home university. In order to get the student mobile, the notion of mobility should function on a day-to-day basis at the home university. It is not sufficient to organise a few information meetings for students, but there should be intensive promotion showing the real values of mobility through meetings with foreign students, seminars and discussions. A serious information gap results from the lack of clearly defined mechanisms of recognising the period of studies abroad and teaching effects at the host university. Otherwise, some students may be afraid of their inability to make up the courses they would miss at the home university during their mobility. An important barrier to student mobility may also be psychological and emotional. Some students have a strong emotional attachment to their parents and family, which may reduce their international mobility. It is advisable to emphasise the benefits of mobility in the field of becoming more independent and self-reliant. Living in a new environment often boosts one's self-confidence and the ability to achieve even very ambitious goals. The outgoing students should also get some help in the financial preparation of their mobility. They should know well in advance the sources of financing their stay abroad as well as the opportunities to earn extra money both before the departure and during the mobility. An additional obstacle relates to students' lack of awareness of the importance of mobility for their employability, personal development and future career. Therefore, a need arises to show the students the great value of international experiences.

One possible measure to promote mobility and overcome the obstacle related to curricula differences is to create a mobility window, i.e. a semester of studies when students are expected to have their mobility. For instance, some programmes offered by the Technical University of Lodz contain such a mobility semester (6<sup>th</sup> semester of studies) (Saryusz-Wolski, Piotrowska 2011: 48–49).

Third, Saryusz-Wolski and Piotrowska (2011: 47–48) identified the lack of appropriate preparation of students as a major obstacle to their mobility. They mentioned under this heading insufficient foreign language competence. Many universities fail to appreciate the role of foreign language competence for employability of their graduates.

In fact, Polish universities often try to fulfil only the minimal requirements on the structure of studies imposed by the ministry, with maybe some additional courses stemming from the competence of existing members of faculty. But they are reluctant to take a more far-reaching approach based on the attractiveness of graduates for potential employers, which could entail additional costs and organisational problems.

We should not neglect certain unexpected events that prevent some students from international mobility. This obstacle applies in particular to students who have qualified for a period of studies abroad, but have to give up, for instance because a member of their family has fallen ill or lost a source of income.

Some former Erasmus students complained that they could take part in student mobility for studies only once in their life, with the possibility of another mobility spell for a placement. This rule of the Erasmus programme was considered as an obstacle to expanding mobility. As there are some students who are particularly interested in international mobility, making possible to go abroad for the second time can increase the general level of Erasmus student mobility.

According to Martowska (2011: 161–164), the international mobility of Polish doctoral students is limited due to a lack of a strategy aiming to promote mobility and a lack of coherent activities to overcome administrative and legal barriers to mobility, e.g. there is no specialized Internet portal where the doctoral student could find all the relevant information about mobility options. Moreover, there are no coherent regulations on the recognition of mobility as part of doctoral studies or professional career. The rules on social security and taxation related to mobility are either missing or dysfunctional. Another obstacle to doctoral student mobility is the great differentiation of the way of conducting doctoral studies in Europe and few instruments to compare achievements and qualifications. 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle qualifications are rarely adjusted to the European Qualification Framework. There are countries where doctoral students are treated as both students and employees or either of these categories. Furthermore, it is worth noting that doctoral students often have their own families, which may entail additional problems stemming from mobility, including financial difficulties. The aforementioned problems are rather European than Polish in scope. However, Poland has some very specific problems as well, the most important of which is the scarcity of international mobility offers unlike the situation for Bachelor and Master students. Doctoral students are more oriented at the academic aspects of their mobility and they have difficulty finding a partner university with experts in their area of specialization. Moreover, Polish universities often fail to fulfil their role as intermediaries in doctoral student mobility. They leave all the bureaucratic burden to potential mobility candidates themselves. The thesis supervisors, doctoral studies managers and deans

frequently lack experience in supporting doctoral student mobility. It is quite common that the doctoral student gets approval for mobility but has to take all the courses and exams at the home university after the return from abroad. He or she may also lose their doctoral scholarship grant, as they cannot prove they have conducted some courses for students at home university during their international mobility. The thesis supervisors often lack enthusiasm when they hear that their doctoral student has the intention to leave for a period of mobility not only because the doctoral student is expected to teach free of charge but also is involved in other scientific and academic activities like helping to organize student exams, common conduct of bachelor or master student seminars with the doctoral thesis supervisor, organizing conferences etc. Doctoral student mobility is sometimes regarded by representatives of the home university as a kind of disloyalty. We should not neglect personal and psychological factors either. The decision to take part in international mobility is easier for extravert personalities. An introverted person may easily get discouraged by initial difficulties as they are excessively cautious and lack self-confidence. The candidates for mobility also differ in terms of the self-assessment of their abilities and competencies, including foreign language skills, and it should be noted that this self-assessment may be wrong sometimes. Paradoxically, certain doctoral students resign from undertaking mobility as they fear they would lose a chance for employment at home university. Last but not least, a shortage of financial means may constitute an obstacle to mobility. The Erasmus grant does not cover all the necessary expenses, and the doctoral scholarship is often suspended during the mobility. Therefore, certain potential candidates refrain from taking the decision to take part in doctoral student international mobility.

### 7.3. ERASMUS EMPLOYABILITY

The Erasmus programme contributes to quality improvement in higher education at 3 levels: system (policy), institutional, and individual, and thus enhances employability of university graduates who have taken part in Erasmus mobility. According to the literature review reported in the European Commission (2008: 38) Erasmus impact study, the Erasmus experience has an effect on the nature of the career but not so clearly on the success of the career. Erasmus graduates are more likely to have jobs that have visible international remits, but the jobs are not necessarily higher in status or income. Employers seem to be more positive about the career effect of the Erasmus than the students themselves. The career effect is, however, not homogenous across the regions. Erasmus has a stronger effect on the careers of students from Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries compared to students from Western Europe.

Table 7.2. The impact of Erasmus mobility on student competences

Student competences	Eastern Europe
Specific academic competences	3.6
General cognitive competences (e.g. analytical thinking, reflective thinking etc.)	3.7
Problem-solving competences	4.3
Foreign language proficiency	4.8
Intercultural competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture, society etc.)	4.5
Socio-communicative competences	4.5
Work-related values and attitudes (e.g. motivation, working ethic etc.)	4.0
Field specific knowledge and competences	4.0
Leadership competences (e.g. ability to take initiative, taking responsibilities etc.)	3.9

Notes: the respondents (Erasmus experts) answered the following question: How do you rate the competences of former Erasmus students at the time of graduation as compared to non-mobile students?

Arithmetic mean of a 5 point scale from 1 = "Much worse" over 3 = "no difference" to 5 = "Much better".

Source: Bracht et al. 2006: 22.

Table 7.3. The impact of Erasmus mobility on selected areas of transition to work

Areas of transition to work	Eastern Europe
<i>Being taken into consideration as one of the final candidates by employers</i>	
No difference	32
Better	68
<i>Getting a job offer after a short period/limited search efforts</i>	
Worse	11
No difference	32
Better	58
<i>Getting employed soon after graduation</i>	
Worse	11
No difference	39
Better	50

Notes: the respondents (Erasmus experts) answered the following question: In your opinion, how do you rate the opportunities of former Erasmus students regarding the following areas of transition to work as compared to their non-mobile fellow students?

Arithmetic mean of a 5 point scale from 1 = "Much worse" over 3 = "no difference" to 5 = "Much better".

Source: Bracht et al. 2006: 24.



Table 7.4. The impact of Erasmus mobility on characteristics of employment and work

Characteristics of employment and work	Eastern Europe
High use of knowledge acquired in the course of study	3.7
A position appropriate to the level of education	3.7
High social status	3.5
High earnings	3.5
Opportunity of pursuing own ideas	3.6
Largely independent disposition of work	3.7
Challenging tasks	3.8
Coordination and management tasks	3.6
High job security	3.2

Notes: the respondents (Erasmus experts) answered the following question: To what extent do the following characteristics of employment and work apply to former Erasmus students as compared to their non-mobile fellow students a couple of years after graduation?

Arithmetic mean of a 5-point scale from 1 = *To a much lower extent* over 3 = *No difference* to 5 = *To a much higher extent*.

Source: Bracht et al. 2006: 29.

In a study quoted in (*Internationalisation...*, 2010: 11), it appeared that in the long run (more than five years after graduation), differences start to become measurable: mobile students on average were found in better-paid jobs than non-mobile students; of course, this may have been caused by self-selection, i.e. ‘potentially better’ students are more mobile.

On the basis of a project called VALERA (VALue of ERAsmus mobility), which focuses on establishing the impact of mobility on the mobile students’ and teachers’ careers within the Erasmus programme, Oliver Bracht et al. (2006) presented to the European Commission a Final Report on ‘The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility’. There were 5 target groups asked to share their perceptions of the impact of Erasmus mobility: national Erasmus agencies, ministries of education, conference of rectors/presidents/vice chancellors, umbrella organisations of employment agencies, and companies. For the questionnaire’s needs, Poland was grouped into Eastern Europe country group (together with Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, and Slovenia). The survey shows that formerly mobile students are considered by most experts to be superior to non-mobile students with respect to various competences (Tab. 7.2). On average, in all 9 mentioned competences, Erasmus students are better rated than non-mobile students. Many experts agree that former Erasmus students are in a better situation when it comes to job search (Tab. 7.3). 68% of experts surveyed in East Country Group think that mobile students have a better chance of being taken into consideration as one of the final candidates by employers.

More than a half of surveyed (58%) believe that former Erasmus students spend less time on job search than their non-mobile fellows. According to ½ of Erasmus experts, former Erasmus students will get employed sooner than non-mobile students. The interviewed experts believe that participation in Erasmus improves the characteristics of employment and work (Tab. 7.4).

Apart from expert opinions, Bracht et al. (2006: 50–51) investigated mobility from the perspective of students. The questionnaire addressed primarily the career of former Erasmus students after graduation, i.e. the transition to employment, the early employment history thereafter and the actual employment and work situation at the time the survey was conducted. A broad range of indicators of professional success was employed: (a) graduation and job search, (b) initial employment, (c) present activity, (d) employment situation and status at the time of the survey, (e) links between study and work assignment, (f) links between orientations and assessment of the professional situation, (g) international aspects of employment and work (working in an international context, international tasks, European and international mobility).

Furthermore, an employers' survey was undertaken in the study on the professional value of Erasmus mobility (Bracht et al. 2006: 84). The following themes were addressed in it: basic information on the employing organisation and their staff, including their international activities; actual numbers of university graduates recruited and former Erasmus students and other internationally mobile students among them; modes and criteria of recruiting university graduates; perceived competences of former Erasmus students; positions and assignments of former Erasmus students; demands of the organisations with respect to competences potentially fostered by study in another country; perceived match or mismatch with supply and suggestions for the change of European and international activities of the universities. Employers from Central and Eastern Europe attach more importance to their candidates' international experiences than their Western European counterparts. 48% of the surveyed employers in Central and Eastern Europe said that work experience abroad was an important recruitment criterion, compared to 27% in Western Europe. 41% of respondents in Central and Eastern Europe expressed such an opinion regarding a study abroad period, whereas it was shared by only 25% of employers in Western Europe. The most important recruitment criteria in Central and Eastern Europe included: personality (indicated by 89% of respondents), foreign language proficiency (87%), and computer skills (87%) (Bracht et al. 2006: 90). It is worth noting that all these competences are likely to be improved during student mobility. Employers from Central and Eastern Europe appreciating study periods abroad in their selection among candidates were asked to rate the importance of different characteristics of the study period abroad. Actually, they emphasised: the language spoken during the study period abroad (83%), the subject area (67%), length of the study period abroad (58%), the specific host country (55%), and reputation of the host higher education institution (49%).

Over 90% of Polish outgoing Erasmus students believe that the study period abroad may be helpful in their future professional careers (Kolanowska 2008a: 85).

In the study of Kolanowska (2008b: 13), only 14.3% of Polish universities reported they collected information on the impact of the Erasmus study or placement on the employability of graduates. Only 7 universities provided more detailed information on this question. They mentioned that they collected this kind of information with the use of surveys conducted by university career offices, e-mails and talks with alumni, and individually obtained information from former Erasmus grant holders. Unfortunately, the quoted study asked only about the way of collecting the information, and not about actual findings concerning employability of former Erasmus students.

In the article for *Dziennik Gazeta Wyborcza*, Prof. Barbara Kudrycka, then Polish Minister of Science said: “Studies at another university, in another city or country allow to get rid of complexes, believe in yourself and get to know your own value. Better educated and more mobile students are beneficial to themselves and the economy” (Grabek 2011).

Mr Jan Truszczyński (General Director for EU Education and Culture in the European Commission since October 2009) in the interview with Mr Roman Gutkowski from EurAactiv said: “Scientific studies have shown that students who went on scholarships abroad, after completing their studies are more likely to find a good job quickly, and a few years after graduation they earn more than their fellows who had no contact with other than their own university, with a different foreign language, with a different culture than his/her own. Even young people who learn in vocational schools and had the opportunity to participate in a few-week internship abroad, take advantage of it, which pays off in the future” (Truszczyński 2011).

In a case study developed by Vossensteyn et al. (2010: 102), there are some interesting opinions of Erasmus participants from Poland. One of them perceives the participation in Erasmus mobility as a kind of investment in the professional career: “Students that are motivated to take part in the Erasmus programme know that they are investing in their careers and that is the great drive and incentive for them to go to study abroad. They are aware of the fact that they are investing in themselves”. The relationship between participation in the Erasmus and the financial benefits acquired is stressed by a participant who claimed that: “We have noticed an increase in the number of students applying to go abroad to gain skills and to practise and get experience in order to get more money, i.e., better salaries. These seem to be the reasons why students find Erasmus beneficial more than going abroad to study and have fun.” Another participant suggested opening up the scope of the Erasmus to include the opportunities that the Erasmus offers students of internships/placements abroad. He said: “We found that internships of all kinds are highly valued by potential employers, and an internship abroad is definitely an ‘added value’ to a graduate’s diploma.”

#### 7.4. CONCLUSION

The extant research tends to focus on mobile student motivations and obstacles to mobility. We observe a shortage of studies concerning long-term impacts of mobility, in particular in the field of employability of former Erasmus students. It would be advisable to carry out more studies based on longitudinal or retrospective methodologies. The best approach would be to have a comparable control group of non-mobile students in order to investigate causal relationships.

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## Chapter 8

### THE RESULTS OF THE MERGE SURVEY AMONG FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS IN POLAND

#### 8.1. MATERIAL AND METHODS

We invited to take the survey all Polish students who had filled in their evaluation forms on the website of the Foundation for the Development of Education System regarding their Erasmus mobility for studies in 2007 (5942 study subjects) and 2008 (6635 study subjects). We added to the sample all graduates from the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the University of Lodz (2128 study subjects) in order to create a control group of internationally immobile students and some representatives of various age cohorts. Thus altogether we addressed our questionnaire to 14,705 Polish students through the Internet professional survey service called *moje-ankieta.pl* in November and December 2012. We received 2450 completed questionnaires. Therefore, the response rate amounted to 16.7%, which may be considered a very good result for this kind of research methodology, taking into account the length of the questionnaire and the associated time and effort required to fill it in.

2369 of our study subjects studied abroad for at least a semester or trimester, whereas 81 did not take part in such mobility. Later on, for the reasons of clarity, we will often refer to the former group as ‘our sample’ or ‘our respondents’ and to the latter as ‘our control group’. We are aware that it is a certain oversimplification, as these groups were not perfectly comparable. Nevertheless, there is no reason to reject the main conclusions stemming from our comparisons.

#### 8.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

27.7% of our respondents in the former international student mobility sample were males, and 72.3% were females. In the control group, there were 79.0%

of females and 21.0% males. This result may be due to several factors, including the higher participation of women in university education and their higher propensity to take part in surveys.

Table 8.1. The year of birth of our respondents

Descriptive statistics	Main sample	Control group
Mean	1985.070	1984.235
Standard Deviation	1.807	3.018
Variance	0.001	0.002
Minimum	1950	1969
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile	1984	1983
Median	1985	1985
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile	1986	1986
Maximum	1989	1989
Skewness	-4.631	-2.139
Kurtosis	69.088	8.452

Notes: main sample – those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects); control group – those who did not take part in international student mobility (81 subjects).

Source: own research.

Our respondents who took part in international student mobility were usually born in 1985, which means they were 27 years old on average at the time of our inquiry (Tab. 8.1). The oldest respondent was born in 1950, and the youngest in 1989. However the vast majority were born from 1984 to 1986. Regarding the control group, the age distribution was quite similar, with the median, 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile and maximum being exactly the same. The average was lower by almost a year.

99.5% have a Polish citizenship. 0.8% reported a German nationality. The sum exceeds slightly 100%, as it is possible to have 2 citizenships at the same time. There were no British or Spanish citizens in our sample. 1 person had Canadian and 1 French nationality. However, our sample is very homogeneous in terms of nationality. All the respondents in the control group had Polish citizenship.

Table 8.2. Respondents by their country of residence

Country of residence	Rank	Number of respondents	%
1	2	3	4
Poland	1	1803	76.11
Germany	2	99	4.18
UK	3	90	3.80
France	4	43	1.82
Spain	5	42	1.77

Table 8.2. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Netherlands	6	38	1.60
Belgium	7	37	1.56
Denmark	8	29	1.22
USA	9	21	0.89
Norway	10–11	16	0.68
Italy	10–11	16	0.68
Switzerland	12	15	0.63
Sweden	13	14	0.59
Austria	14–15	13	0.55
Hungary	14–15	13	0.55
Ireland	16–17	8	0.34
Portugal	16–17	8	0.34
Czech Republic	18–19	7	0.30
China	18–19	7	0.30
Finland	20–21	6	0.25
Turkey	20–21	6	0.25
Canada	22	4	0.17
Russia	23–25	3	0.13
Slovakia	23–25	3	0.13
United Arab Emirates	23–25	3	0.13
Israel	26–30	2	0.08
Qatar	26–30	2	0.08
Malaysia	26–30	2	0.08
Malta	26–30	2	0.08
New Zealand	26–30	2	0.08
Chile	31–42	1	0.04
Croatia	31–42	1	0.04
Egypt	31–42	1	0.04
Estonia	31–42	1	0.04
India	31–42	1	0.04
Lebanon	31–42	1	0.04
Lithuania	31–42	1	0.04
Mexico	31–42	1	0.04
Greece	31–42	1	0.04
Peru	31–42	1	0.04
Taiwan	31–42	1	0.04
Tanzania	31–42	1	0.04
No data	x	3	0.13
Total	x	2369	100.00

Note: those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects).

Source: own research.



Our respondents who took part in international student mobility live in 42 countries (Tab. 8.2). Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  stay in Poland. Germany and the United Kingdom have attracted about 4% of our respondents each. Between 1 and 2% live in each of the following countries: France, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark. Therefore, the EU member states are the most common destination countries for our respondents. However, taking into account current trends in mobility, it is sometimes difficult to define the country of residence. A few of the study subjects mentioned more than one country, and someone indicated Europe as a whole.

Regarding the control group, 72 out of 81 respondents reported living in Poland, i.e. 88.9%. This share was significantly higher than among former international student mobility participants, which seems to confirm the hypothesis of a link between student mobility and subsequent mobility or emigration.

Table 8.3. Respondents by their home university

Home university	Rank	Number of respondents	%
1	2	3	4
University of Warsaw	1	164	6.92
Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan	2	160	6.75
University of Lodz	3	154	6.50
University of Wroclaw	4	147	6.21
Jagiellonian University of Cracow	5	138	5.83
Technical University of Lodz	6	82	3.46
Technical University of Warsaw	7	78	3.29
University of Silesia in Katowice	8	71	3.00
University of Gdansk	9	69	2.91
Nicolaus Copernicus University of Torun	10	65	2.74
National School of Agriculture in Warsaw (SGGW)	11	54	2.28
National University of Economics in Warsaw (SGH)	12	50	2.11
Technical University of Silesia	13–14	48	2.03
University of Economics in Poznan	13–14	48	2.03
University of Mining and Metallurgy in Cracow (AGH)	15	45	1.90
Technical University of Gdansk	16	42	1.77
Technical University of Wroclaw	17	40	1.69
Catholic University of Lublin	18–19	32	1.35
Technical University of Cracow	18–19	32	1.35
University of Economics in Cracow	20–21	31	1.31
Technical University of Poznan	20–21	31	1.31
Technical University of Bialystok	22–23	28	1.18
Maria Curie-Sklodowska University of Lublin	22–23	28	1.18

Table 8.3. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
University of Szczecin	24	27	1.14
Technical University of West Pomerania in Szczecin	25–26	26	1.10
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn	25–26	26	1.10
University of Bialystok	27–28	23	0.97
Technical University of Lublin	27–28	23	0.97
University of Economics in Wroclaw	29–32	22	0.93
Pedagogical University in Cracow	29–32	22	0.93
Technical University of Opole	29–32	22	0.93
University of Rzeszow	29–32	22	0.93
Agricultural University in Wroclaw	33–35	16	0.68
University of Opole	33–35	16	0.68
Agricultural University of Cracow	33–35	16	0.68
University of Nature in Wroclaw	36	15	0.63
Medical University of Gdansk	37	14	0.59
Higher School of Social Psychology in Warsaw	38	13	0.55
Academy of Physical Education in Wroclaw	39–40	12	0.51
Academy of Physical Education in Poznan	39–40	12	0.51
Academy of Technology and Humanities in Biel-sko-Biala	41–44	10	0.42
Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw	41–44	10	0.42
Medical University of Silesia	41–44	10	0.42
Medical University of Lodz	41–44	10	0.42
Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw	45–49	9	0.38
Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw	45–49	9	0.38
State Higher School in Krosno	45–49	9	0.38
Technical University of Radom	45–49	9	0.38
Technical University of Czestochowa	45–49	9	0.38
Medical University of Wroclaw	50–53	8	0.34
Academy of Podlasie in Siedlce	50–53	8	0.34
Academy of Physical Education in Cracow	50–53	8	0.34
University of Technology and Nature in Bydgoszcz	50–53	8	0.34
Academy of Special Pedagogy in Warsaw	54–57	6	0.25
Academy of Pomorze in Slupsk	54–57	6	0.25
State Higher School in Nysa	54–57	6	0.25
Lazarski University in Warsaw	54–57	6	0.25
Medical University of Poznan	58–64	4	0.17
Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk	58–64	4	0.17
Collegium Civitas in Warsaw	58–64	4	0.17
University of Music in Warsaw	58–64	4	0.17

Table 8.3. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
University of Nature and Humanities in Siedlce	58–64	4	0.17
Higher School of Economics in Budgoszcz	58–64	4	0.17
Higher School of Banking in Torun	58–64	4	0.17
Academy of Humanities and Economics in Lodz	65–76	3	0.13
Leon Kozminski Academy in Warsaw	65–76	3	0.13
Academy of Fine Arts in Wroclaw	65–76	3	0.13
Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow	65–76	3	0.13
Higher School of Commerce of Upper Silesia in Katowice	65–76	3	0.13
State Higher School in Walbrzych	65–76	3	0.13
University of Nature in Lublin	65–76	3	0.13
Military Academy of Technology in Warsaw	65–76	3	0.13
Higher European School in Krakow	65–76	3	0.13
Higher School of Computer Science and Management in Rzeszow	65–76	3	0.13
Higher School of Marketing Management and Foreign Languages in Katowice	65–76	3	0.13
Higher School of Public Administration in Bialystok	65–76	3	0.13
Higher School of Linguistics in Czestochowa	77–96	2	0.08
Jan Dlugosz Academy in Czestochowa	77–96	2	0.08
Academy of Music in Gdansk	77–96	2	0.08
Academy of Music in Katowice	77–96	2	0.08
Academy of Music in Poznan	77–96	2	0.08
Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice	77–96	2	0.08
Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz	77–96	2	0.08
Polish Open University in Warsaw	77–96	2	0.08
Medical University of Pomerania in Szczecin	77–96	2	0.08
Jerzy Zietek Silesian Higher School of Management	77–96	2	0.08
Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce	77–96	2	0.08
Medical University of Bialystok	77–96	2	0.08
Higher School of Banking in Poznan	77–96	2	0.08
Higher Business School in Nowy Sacz	77–96	2	0.08
Higher School of Logistics	77–96	2	0.08
Wszotechnica Swietokrzyska	77–96	2	0.08
Higher School of Management and Administration in Zamosc	77–96	2	0.08
Ignatianum Higher School of Philosophy and Pedagogy	77–96	2	0.08
Higher School of Foreign Languages in Poznan	77–96	2	0.08
West Pomeranian Business School	77–96	2	0.08

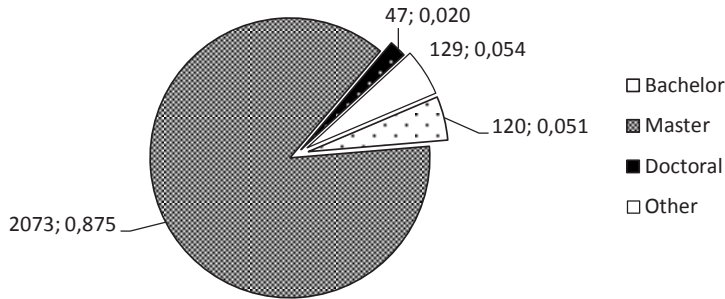
Table 8.3. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Academy of Finances in Warsaw	97–115	1	0.04
Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz	97–115	1	0.04
State Higher School in Wloclawek	97–115	1	0.04
State Higher School in Leszno	97–115	1	0.04
State Higher School in Elblag	97–115	1	0.04
State Higher School in Kalisz	97–115	1	0.04
State Higher School in Konin	97–115	1	0.04
State Higher School in Nowy Sacz	97–115	1	0.04
State Higher School in Chelm	97–115	1	0.04
National School of Fire Service	97–115	1	0.04
University of Economics in Katowice	97–115	1	0.04
Medical University of Lublin	97–115	1	0.04
Higher Business School in Gdansk	97–115	1	0.04
Higher Business School in Gorzow	97–115	1	0.04
Higher School of Commerce in Radom	97–115	1	0.04
Higher School of Technology and Economics in Warsaw	97–115	1	0.04
Higher School of Tourism and Ecology in Sucha Beskidzka	97–115	1	0.04
Higher School of Philology in Wroclaw	97–115	1	0.04
Higher School of Applied Art	97–115	1	0.04
Not identified	x	141	5.95
Total	x	2369	100.00

Note: those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects).

Source: own research.

We have obtained answers from former Erasmus students representing 115 Polish higher education institutions (Tab. 8.3). Therefore, our sample is very diverse and resembles very well the general population of all Polish outgoing Erasmus students. Unsurprisingly, the ranking is led by the biggest state-owned universities. The top 5 include: University of Warsaw, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan, University of Lodz, University of Wroclaw, and the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. The third rank of the University of Lodz stems partly from its remarkable performance within the Erasmus programme and partly from the extension of our sample to other age cohorts from the Faculty of International and Political Studies. It is also worth noting the high positions occupied by technical universities, including the Technical University of Lodz, which was the 6<sup>th</sup> regarding the number of respondents. We were unable to identify the home university of almost 6% of our respondents due to incomplete data, ambivalent abbreviations, mistakes, and deliberate refusal to provide the information.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)

Figure 8.1. Our respondents by their education level  
(absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

A vast majority of our respondents (7/8) reported having maximum educational qualifications at the Master level (Fig. 8.1). Only 5.4% had finished their education at the Bachelor level. This is a result of a rather easy access to higher education in Poland as well as the higher than average ambitions and opportunities of those who had taken part in Erasmus. The answers provided in the 'other' category concern specialised professional titles like engineer or doctor, incomplete higher education, postgraduate education (which usually means in Poland 1 or 2 years after obtaining the Master), education completed abroad, some special cases and misunderstandings.

The structure of the control group in terms of education was very similar to the main sample. There were 6.2% graduates of Bachelor studies, 87.7% with the Master title, 3.7% with a Ph.D., and 2.5% reported other kinds of education.

Table 8.4. Our respondents by their field of studies

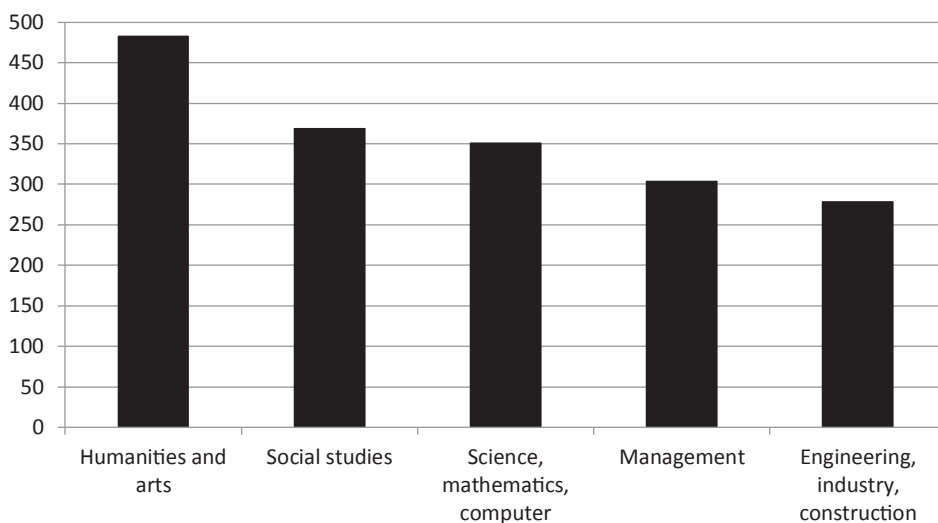
Field of studies	Rank	Number of respondents	%
1	2	3	4
Humanities and arts	1	483	20.39
Social studies	2	369	15.58
Science, mathematics, computing	3	351	14.82
Management (business studies)	4	304	12.83
Engineering, manufacturing, construction	5	278	11.73
Law and administration	6	161	6.80
Education	7	110	4.64
Health and social care	8	84	3.55

Table 8.4. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Agriculture and veterinary studies	9	22	0.93
Services	10	11	0.46
Other	x	518	21.87
Total	x	2369	100.00

Note: the total number of answers (2691) was higher than the number of respondents (2369) as some of them could graduate from more than one field of study.

Source: own research.



Note: the total number of answers (2691) was higher than the number of respondents (2369) as some of them could graduate from more than one field of study

Figure 8.2. The principal fields of studies of our respondents (absolute numbers)

Source: own research

We wanted to know the fields of studies represented by our respondents (Tab. 8.4, Fig. 8.2). It turned out that the number of answers was higher than the number of study subjects, as some of them could study more than one field. We received a very high share of answers in the category ‘other’, because multiple respondents failed to classify their field of studies within the proposed broader category and they considered it necessary to provide a separate narrow definition. Regarding the existing categories, it was humanities and arts that ranked the highest (as over 1/5 of our respondents graduated from these fields) followed by social

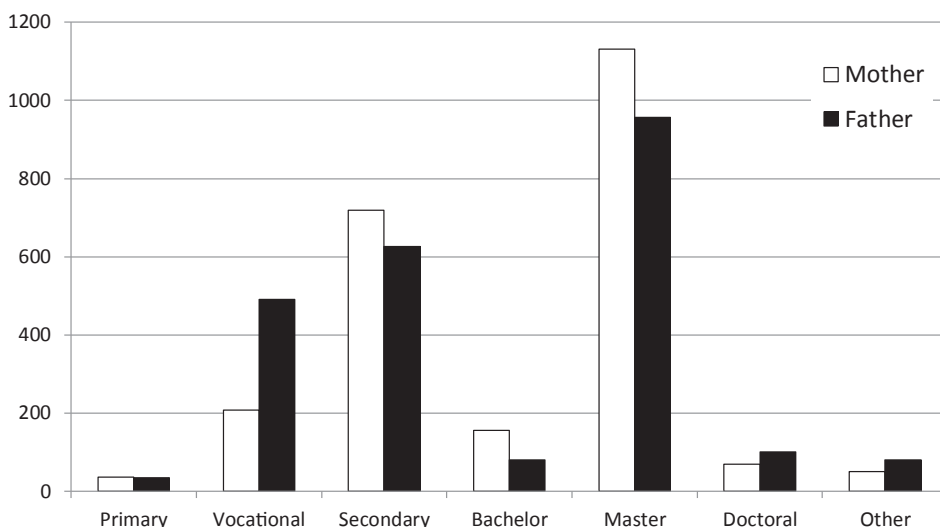
studies (15.6%), science, mathematics and computing (14.8%), management (business studies) (12.8%), and engineering, manufacturing and construction (11.7%). There were fewer graduates of: law and administration, education, health and social care, agriculture and veterinary studies, and services.

In the 'other' category, we had many specific answers falling into the main categories, but mentioned here instead, including: European studies, archaeology, architecture and urban studies, financial auditing, automatics and robotics, banking and finance, national security, biochemistry, biology, biotechnology, international business, business and languages, chemistry, journalism, art education, economics, econometrics, electronics and telecommunications, electrical technology, energy, foreign language or Polish philology, linguistics, philosophy, accounting, physiotherapy, physics, geography, geology, spatial economics, computer graphics, foreign trade, history, hotel management, computer science, international management, international marketing, environment engineering, Italian studies, jazz, languages, intercultural communication, heritage conservation, cultural studies, Latin American studies, forestry, applied linguistics, logistics, painting, marketing, mechatronics, medicine, quantitative methods in economics, international economics, music, earth studies, life sciences, food and nutrition, political studies, technical studies, navigation, neurocognition, German studies, tourism, oceanography, resocialisation pedagogy, spatial planning, Public Relations, political studies, environment protection, psychology, accounting, Roman philology, Slav philology, sociology, sports and recreation, international relations, job counselling, food technology, chemical technology, telecommunications, theology, translation studies, merchandise knowledge, transportation, physical education, zootechnology.

Table 8.5. The education level of our respondents' parents (absolute numbers and fractions)

Education level	Mother		Father	
	Number	Fraction	Number	Fraction
Primary	37	0.016	34	0.014
Vocational	207	0.087	491	0.207
Secondary	719	0.304	627	0.265
Bachelor	156	0.066	81	0.034
Master	1131	0.477	956	0.404
Doctoral	69	0.029	100	0.042
Other	50	0.021	80	0.034
Total	2369	1.000	2369	1.000

Source: own research.



Note: those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)  
 Figure 8.3. The level of education of our respondents' parents (absolute numbers)

Source: own research

We were also interested in the education level of our respondents' parents (Tab. 8.5, Fig. 8.3). They were usually higher education graduates at the Master level (47.7% of mothers and 40.4% of fathers). However, there was also a considerable group of parents having only secondary or vocational education. The share of parents with only primary education was very low. Bachelor studies were not very common either due to the history of the education system in Poland (5-year-long undivided Master studies had prevailed until recently). Our respondents' parents were much better educated than their age cohorts in the Polish society.

In the control group, the education level of our respondents' parents was as follows: a) regarding mothers: primary – 1.2%, vocational – 7.4%, secondary – 39.5%, Bachelor – 6.2%, Master – 39.5%, doctoral – 3.7%, other – 2.5%; b) regarding fathers: : primary – 2.5%, vocational – 29.6%, secondary – 29.6%, Bachelor – 4.9%, Master – 30.9%, doctoral – 1.2%, other – 1.2%. Comparing these data to the main sample, we may notice a bit lower share of parents having completed university education (both mothers and fathers), which may support the hypothesis that students with parents having a higher level of education tend to participate in international student mobility more often.

84.0% of our study subjects said they had a family member or friend studying or living abroad, which suggests their international student mobility was not an isolated incident, but rather something natural. International mobility of family members and/or friends could occur both before and after one's own mobility spell. However, at the time of our enquiry, the phenomenon was much more developed

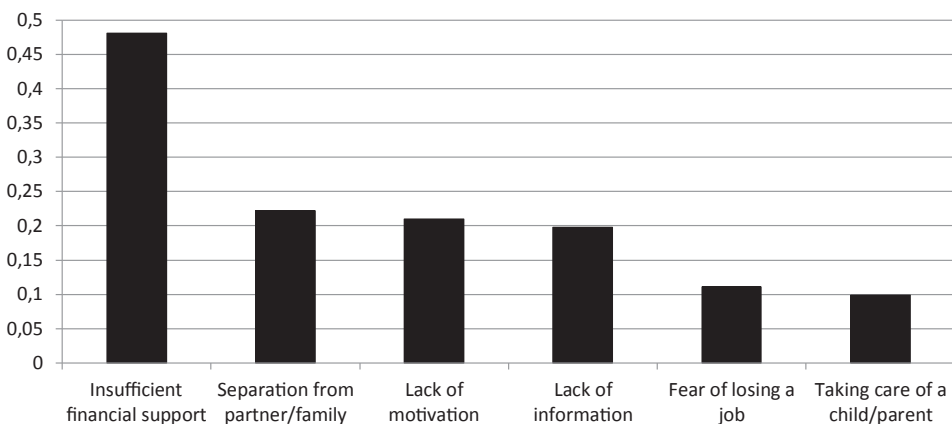


and intensive compared to the time of departure of our respondents (usually 5–6 years before). In the control group, the share of respondents with a family member or friend studying or living abroad was exactly the same as in the main sample – 84.0%. However, before we draw any conclusions, we must take into account the fact that the control group consisted of students from the Faculty of International and Political Studies.

49.8% of our respondents provided their email addresses in order to be involved in our research and get updates information on the results. It means that half of the former student mobility participants are interested in exploring the patterns of mobility, which may suggest certain curiosity but also emotional attachment to the issue of international mobility. 29.6% of respondents from the control group were interested in receiving feedback by email, which indicates a lower level of interest in the subject under study.

### 8.3. PRINCIPAL RESULTS

Among those Polish students who were internationally immobile (81 study subjects), the following reasons for the decision not to study abroad were the most important: insufficient financial support, fear of separation from one's partner or family, lack of motivation, insufficient information about mobility opportunities, fear of losing one's job, and an obligation to take care of one's child or parent (Fig. 8.4, Tab. 8.6). Other reasons which were mentioned spontaneously by our respondents included: having a second field of study in Poland, the necessity to catch up with the study programme after the return, preferring to take part in summer jobs abroad.



Note: fractions of all those who did not take part in international student mobility (81 study subjects)

Figure 8.4. The principal reasons for the decision not to take part in an international student mobility (fractions)

Source: own research

Table 8.6. Reasons for the decision not to study abroad

Reasons for the decision not to study abroad	Rank	Fraction
Insufficient financial support	1	0.481
Fear of separation from one's partner or family	2	0.222
Lack of motivation	3	0.210
Lack of information about mobility opportunities	4	0.198
Fear of losing one's job	5	0.111
Obligation to take care of a child or parent	6	0.099
Few international mobility opportunities at one's university	7-9	0.074
Insufficient foreign language skills	7-9	0.074
No time for an international experience within one's programme of study	7-9	0.074
Fear about the quality of mobility experience	10-12	0.062
Fear about recognition of academic work completed abroad	10-12	0.062
Other reasons	10-12	0.062
Legal barriers	13	0.037

Note: fractions of all those who did not take part in international student mobility (81 study subjects).

Source: own research.

Out of the 2369 study participants who had had a study period abroad, 82.6% studied abroad once, 14.5% twice, 2.1% three times, and 0.7% more than 3 times.

22.3% of the internationally mobile Polish students in our sample took part in their mobility at the Bachelor level of studies, 78.2% at the Master level, 4.6% at the doctoral studies level, and 4.1% said it was another level of studies (including 5-year studies leading to a Master, engineer studies, medical studies, non-degree studies, postgraduate studies, MBA, MFA, after completing studies in Poland, study sessions/certificates, a language course, a college, secondary school, a thematic Socrates course, a summer school, a research scholarship).

Table 8.7. The year of (the first) international student mobility

Descriptive statistics	Value
Mean	2007.792
Standard Deviation	1.105
Variance	0.001
Minimum	1997
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile	2007
Median	2008
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile	2008
Maximum	2012
Skewness	-2.967
Kurtosis	21.723

Source: own research.

The study participants carried out their international student mobility usually in 2007 or 2008, which stems from our sampling method. The year of mobility ranges from 1997 to 2012 due to the inclusion of various age cohorts from the University of Lodz, with the vast majority of students taking part in Erasmus in 2007 and 2008 (Tab. 8.7).

Table 8.8. Student mobility by the host country

Host country	Rank	Number of respondents	%
1	2	3	4
Germany	1	261	11.02
Spain	2	181	7.64
France	3	173	7.30
Denmark	4	150	6.33
UK	5-6	108	4.56
Portugal	5-6	108	4.56
Finland	7	100	4.22
Belgium	8-9	95	4.01
Italy	8-9	95	4.01
Sweden	10	81	3.42
Netherlands	11	78	3.29
Czech Republic	12	69	2.91
Turkey	13	60	2.53
Austria	14	52	2.20
Greece	15	42	1.77
Slovakia	16	39	1.65
Hungary	17	29	1.22
Norway	18	28	1.18
Lithuania	19	21	0.89
Slovenia	20	20	0.84
Bulgaria	21	19	0.80
Ireland	22	13	0.55
Latvia	23	8	0.34
Estonia	24-25	6	0.25
USA	24-25	6	0.25
Cyprus	26	5	0.21
Canada	27-29	3	0.13
Romania	27-29	3	0.13
Russia	27-29	3	0.13
Iceland	30-32	2	0.08
Malta	30-32	2	0.08
Switzerland	30-32	2	0.08

Table 8.8. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Belarus	33–37	1	0.04
China (Hong Kong)	33–37	1	0.04
Japan	33–37	1	0.04
Syria	33–37	1	0.04
Ukraine	33–37	1	0.04
Lack of data	x	502	21.19
Total	x	2369	100.00

Source: own research.

The main destination countries for the student (first-time) mobility of our study subjects were: Germany, Spain, France, Denmark, UK, Portugal, Finland, Belgium and Italy (Tab. 8.8). In total 37 host countries are represented in our sample, as it concerns not only Erasmus mobility, but all kinds of student mobility. Nevertheless, Erasmus accounts for a vast majority of destination countries mentioned by our respondents.

Table 8.9. The duration of the international student mobility

Mobility spell	Fraction
For the first time	
Less than a semester	0.033
A semester	0.629
A year	0.310
More than a year	0.022
For the second time	
Less than a semester	0.030
A semester	0.055
A year	0.044
More than a year	0.041
For the third time	
Less than a semester	0.007
A semester	0.006
A year	0.006
More than a year	0.012

Source: own research.

Our respondents reported having taken part in international student mobility, which lasted (for the first time) usually a semester (62.9% of answers) (Tab. 8.9). Less than 1/3 of the study subjects studied abroad for a year, and only 2.2% spent there more than one year. As far as the second and third-time mobility is concerned, its duration tends to be longer, but these are relatively rare cases.

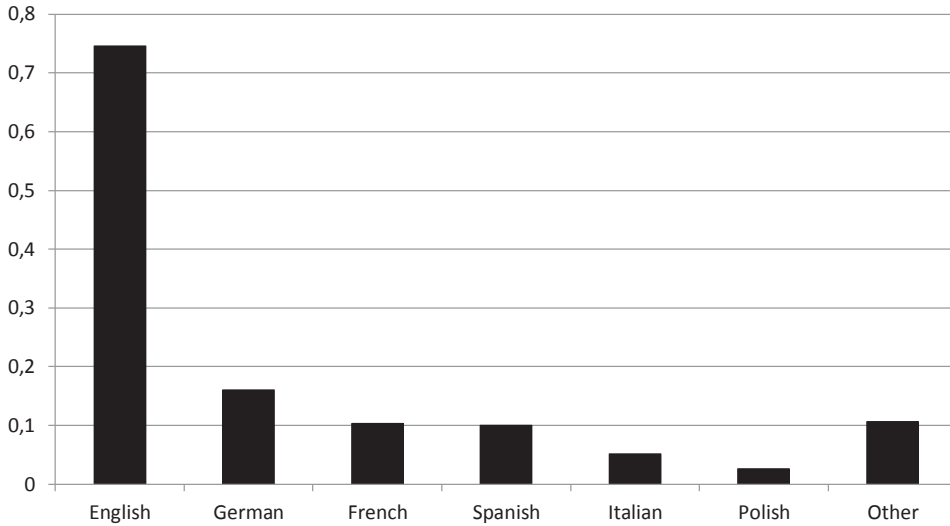


Figure 8.5. Language of studies abroad (fractions)

Source: own research

Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the study subjects had their courses in English (at least some of them) during their international student mobility (Fig. 8.5). The second most popular foreign language was German, as 16.0% of the respondents studied in it. It was followed by French (10.6%), Spanish (10.0%), and Italian (5.2%). 2.6% of Polish students going abroad studied in Polish, and 10.6% in other languages, including: Portuguese (61 study subjects, which is almost the same as for Polish – 2.6%), Czech (44 = 1.9%), Russian (20 = 0.8%), Slovak (19), Greek (12), Turkish (12), Bulgarian (10), Catalan (10), Dutch (9), Norwegian (9), Swedish (8), Finnish (7), Danish (4), Hungarian (4), Croat (3), Lithuanian (3), Slovenian (2), Arabic (1), Chinese (1), Hebrew (1), Indonesian (1), Japanese (1), Latvian (1), Persian (1), and Serb (1). The sum of answers need not be 100%, as it is possible to study in more than one language during the same mobility.

A vast majority of our study subjects carried out their international student mobility in the framework of the Erasmus programme (93.0% for the first-time

mobility) (Tab. 8.10). Erasmus Mundus accounted for 3.4%, and other programmes for 2.9% of the respondents engaged in the first-time mobility. This result stems to a large extent from our sampling method, but also from the general popularity of the Erasmus programme among Polish students. It is worth noting that for second and third-time mobility it is other programmes that prevail. Therefore, Erasmus may be treated as a trigger and facilitator of further student mobility. The other programmes included: bilateral agreements, Campus Europae, CEEPUS, Comenius, co-tutelle, Circeos, CIRIUS, DAAD, Erasmus mobility for work placement, EU Articulation, IAESTE, Leonardo da Vinci, Visby, Darmasiswa, CEU fellowship, Amgen Scholars Programme, EUCOREM, EUKLA, European Social Fund, Fulbright, GFPS, IT PRO, Laurea Specialistica, Lions Club, MCTS Maastricht Studies, French government stipends, MPD, IMPRS, EU-Canada Student Mobility, PIM, CIMO, CNIC, Rotary Youth, DBU, Krupp Foundation, Santiago Grisolia, Yorkshire Forwards, Visegrad Fund, Hanban Foundation, Tempus, Ubo Emius, CEMS, double diploma programmes, and last but not least, direct application for studies abroad.

Table 8.10. The programme of the international student mobility

Mobility programme	Fraction
For the first time	
Erasmus	0.930
Erasmus Mundus	0.034
Other	0.029
For the second time	
Erasmus	0.033
Erasmus Mundus	0.008
Other	0.124
For the third time	
Erasmus	0.003
Erasmus Mundus	0.001
Other	0.027

Source: own research.

21.6% of the study subjects were involved in the activities of student associations and clubs during their international mobility. Among those who were engaged in such activities, 36 were members of the students' union executive committee, 360 belonged to student clubs, and 78 in student forums and consortia.

118 respondents reported having been active in other kinds of student organisations, including: AEGEE, AIESEC, university sports team, university ambassadors, BEST, academic sports associations, choir, Erasmus club, international office, Erasmus Student Network, a students' newsletter, a local GFPS group, dance group, academic interest groups, IAESTE, student cafeteria, a film club, ESEG, mountaineering and climbing club, a non-governmental organisation, charity organisations, orchestra, organisations of Poles living abroad, business organisations, work placements, cultural organisations, university radio, tourist organisations, alumni associations, a student photo agency, student jobs, student theatre, participation in sports competitions and other events organized by the host university, field research, organization of conferences, work of an academic journal, voluntary job in a diplomatic institution.

53.9% of the study subjects reported they had been involved in organised extra-curricular activities at the host institution. The fields of activities included: culture (mentioned by 31.5% of all respondents who had taken part in an international student mobility), sports (26.8%), social activities (20.0%), politics (1.7%), and other areas (6.9%). The remaining fields of activities included: work placements, jobs (both paid and voluntary), artistic activities, astronomy, research, ceramics, photography, further education, consulting, religious activities, journalism, ecology, cultural events, parties, learning languages, academic interest groups, concerts, conferences, literature, marketing, student organisations, teaching Polish, travelling, cooking, charity, business projects, love affair, entertainment, dancing, tourism, sightseeing, media, students' life.

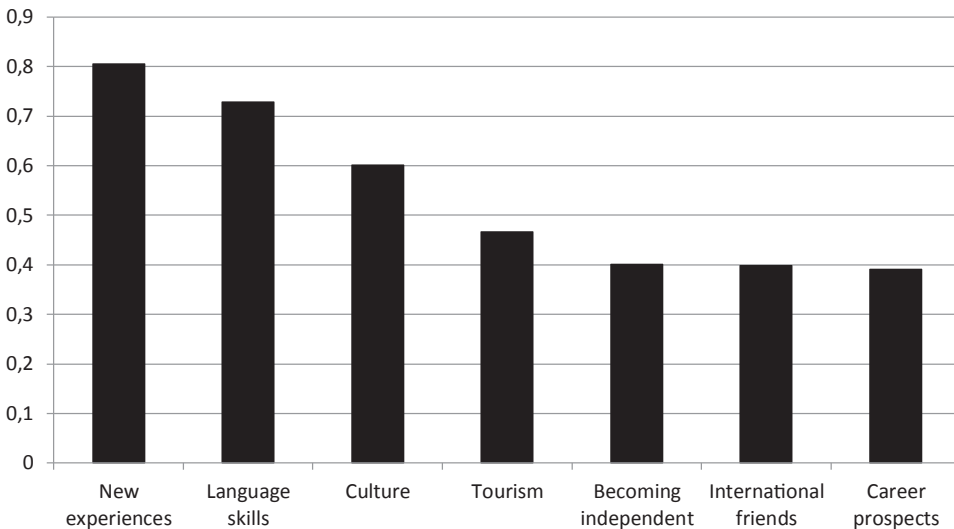


Figure 8.6. The principal international student mobility motivations (fractions)

Source: own research

Table 8.11. The international student mobility motivations (fractions)

Motivation	R	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
To gain new experiences	1	0.805	0.152	0.031	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001
To acquire practical foreign language skills	2	0.729	0.146	0.065	0.022	0.012	0.007	0.008
To get to know a new culture	3	0.601	0.219	0.120	0.027	0.012	0.004	0.007
To visit more parts of the world	4	0.466	0.253	0.165	0.052	0.022	0.010	0.013
To become more independent	5	0.401	0.229	0.171	0.084	0.028	0.020	0.057
To make international friends	6	0.398	0.282	0.177	0.063	0.030	0.014	0.017
To have better career prospects	7	0.391	0.225	0.169	0.119	0.030	0.019	0.029
To live abroad	8	0.350	0.232	0.189	0.108	0.039	0.023	0.046
Courses in other languages	9	0.321	0.228	0.181	0.105	0.041	0.034	0.070
To broaden one's academic knowledge	10	0.280	0.230	0.273	0.094	0.046	0.027	0.026
The destination country	11	0.209	0.170	0.183	0.163	0.084	0.055	0.110
To have some fun	12	0.206	0.218	0.270	0.122	0.075	0.041	0.050
The study programme	13	0.117	0.141	0.199	0.208	0.105	0.084	0.127
The destination city	14	0.092	0.091	0.174	0.210	0.111	0.088	0.203
The host university reputation	15	0.077	0.104	0.182	0.214	0.107	0.091	0.187
Recommendations from students	16	0.061	0.122	0.168	0.185	0.102	0.098	0.243
Recommendations from professors	17	0.036	0.072	0.118	0.196	0.096	0.116	0.341
Other motivations	18	0.035	0.008	0.005	0.040	0.002	0.003	0.084

Notes: R – rank; 7 – very important; 1 – with no importance.

Source: own research.

We asked our respondents why they had decided to study abroad (Fig. 8.6, Tab. 8.11). They were supposed to use a 7-item Likert scale to assess the importance of selected factors. The principal motivations included: to gain new experiences (mentioned as very important by over 4/5 of the study subjects), to acquire practical foreign language skills (almost  $\frac{3}{4}$ ), and to get to know a new culture ( $\frac{3}{5}$ ). Other important motivations were as follows: tourism (almost a half of the respondents assessed it as very important), becoming more independent, making international friends, and having better career prospects (each of these factors gained about  $\frac{2}{5}$  of answers in the top category). Less important motivations encompassed: living abroad, having courses in other languages at the host university, broadening one's academic knowledge, the destination country, and having



fun. It is worth noting that the least important motivations included: the study programme, the destination city, the host university reputation and recommendations from other students and home university professors. Other motivations which were not an option in our catalogue of answers were considered very important by only 3.5% of our respondents, so we may assume that the construction of the question reflected quite well the main motivations of studying abroad. It should be underlined that strictly academic reasons do not belong to priority motivations for international student mobility except for improvement of one's foreign language skills. Psychological, social and cultural considerations seem much more relevant in general. It should also be noted for some respondents different effects of their first-time and subsequent student mobility periods.

The relatively few motivations mentioned spontaneously included: to get away from working as in Poland the respondent combined studying with a job; to improve one's self-assessment; to live the adventure of one's life; to be close to a winter sports resort; not to study in Poland; to check if one can manage abroad in new circumstances; curiosity; following one's parents who had studied abroad; to get away from Polish narrow-mindedness; to get to know another university; to benefit from a good scholarship; to make one's opinion about the Erasmus programme; to match one's girlfriend/boyfriend; to conduct research for one's master or doctoral thesis; to avoid a difficult exam at the home university; the quality of education and teaching level; to get access to nice laboratories; a unique field of studies in English; because of the food of the host country; because of having lived in the host country in the past; to broaden one's horizons; the host country music; because of a better social security; to make acquaintance with foreign professors; because of a disappointment with university education in Poland; because of a recommendation of one's thesis supervisor; because of the climate of the host country; to have a change after 3 years of studies; recommendation from a friend who graduated from the host university; because of the lack of tolerance in the Polish society for homosexuals; because there is a mobility window during the studies at the host university – during the 6<sup>th</sup> semester one has to take part in mobility; to have a half-year rest; the practice of teaching Polish as a foreign language; because of having friends in the host city; to appreciate the quality of life abroad; to change one's qualifications; taking the decision without any considerations, just to try; cheap beer; to get away from one's personal problems; to get away from one's family; to live in a student dormitory; being addicted to travelling; a field of studies which does not exist in Poland; to gain experience in various academic institutions and in international teams; because of the equipment available at the host university; cooperation with specialists; previous positive experiences with living abroad; because all one's friends went abroad; to fulfil one's dreams; because it is possible to take part in a work placement during one's studies at the host university; because one had studied the language of the host country; because of multiculturalism; because one felt appreciated by being qualified

for Erasmus; to find valuable materials for one's thesis; to change one's environment; because of a relationship with a foreigner; not to regret missed opportunities and believe in oneself.

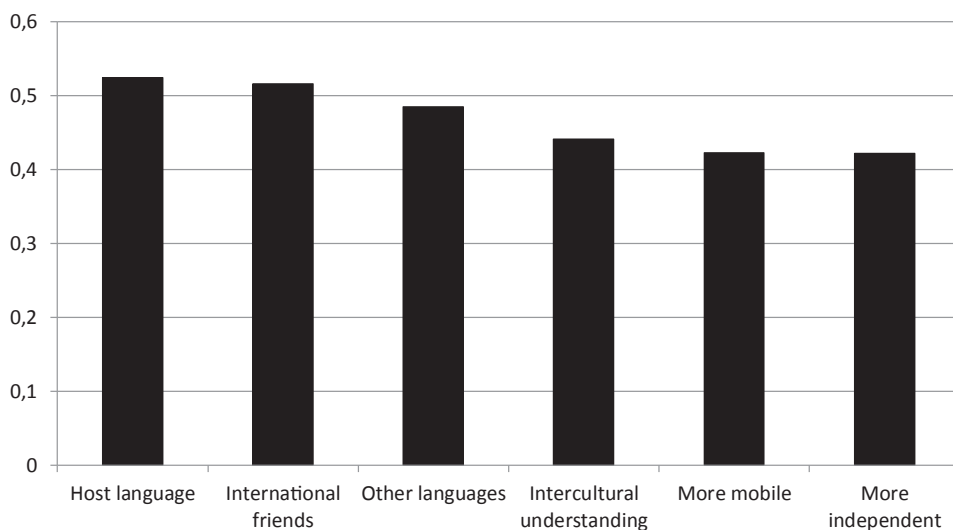


Figure 8.7. The principal self-reported effects of international student mobility (fractions)

Source: own research

Table 8.12. The self-reported effects of international student mobility (fractions)

Effect	R	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Better host country language skills	1	0.524	0.137	0.122	0.061	0.033	0.049	0.069
Making international friends	2	0.516	0.221	0.152	0.048	0.017	0.017	0.017
Better other foreign language skills	3	0.485	0.214	0.131	0.069	0.022	0.020	0.049
Better intercultural understanding	4	0.441	0.269	0.176	0.058	0.013	0.014	0.013
Becoming more mobile	5	0.423	0.263	0.147	0.098	0.020	0.013	0.029
Becoming more independent	6	0.422	0.249	0.157	0.095	0.021	0.016	0.032
Becoming more self-confident	7	0.372	0.280	0.185	0.092	0.025	0.013	0.024
Feeling more European	8	0.336	0.195	0.153	0.146	0.035	0.031	0.092
Making friends with local people	9	0.287	0.203	0.203	0.137	0.050	0.050	0.057
Increase of one's aspirations towards career	10	0.284	0.229	0.171	0.185	0.041	0.027	0.053

Table 8.12. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
More opportunities to get a better job	11	0.279	0.220	0.192	0.183	0.033	0.036	0.043
Feeling more international	12	0.276	0.186	0.154	0.198	0.034	0.030	0.107
Becoming more entrepreneurial	13	0.274	0.223	0.209	0.176	0.041	0.021	0.043
Improvement of one's academic knowledge	14	0.257	0.256	0.243	0.140	0.048	0.022	0.025
More opportunities to get a job abroad	15	0.255	0.209	0.183	0.209	0.041	0.033	0.056
Bibliography for one's thesis	16	0.211	0.099	0.106	0.111	0.062	0.066	0.334
Better ability to work in a team	17	0.199	0.191	0.222	0.221	0.051	0.038	0.065
More motivations towards learning	18	0.170	0.176	0.198	0.219	0.071	0.055	0.089
Improvement of one's learning skills	19	0.148	0.157	0.209	0.257	0.082	0.049	0.082
Better knowledge of the labour market	20	0.125	0.135	0.180	0.257	0.089	0.075	0.124
Other effects	21	0.027	0.003	0.002	0.041	0.000	0.000	0.060

Notes: R – rank; 7 – totally agree; 1 – totally disagree.

Source: own research.

According to our respondents, the study abroad period affected to the largest extent the following elements: host country language skills and making international friends (more than a half of our respondents totally agreed with these effects) (Fig. 8.7, Tab. 8.12). The third rank was taken by the improvement of other foreign language skills, followed by an increase of one's intercultural understanding. Then we noticed several effects related to the personal development of the study subjects. They reported becoming more mobile, independent and self-confident thanks to the international student mobility. More than a third mentioned they felt more European. Making friends with local people was much less common than making international friends, which confirmed our expectations and previous research results. The study subjects also believed that their student mobility contributed to an increase of their expectations towards a professional career and almost the same number of them were confident their opportunities to get a better job increased. More than a half of the respondents totally agreed with the following effects: feeling more international, becoming more entrepreneurial, improvement of their academic knowledge, and having more opportunities to get a job abroad, which would constitute a link between the student mobility and subsequent professional mobility. Less important effects included: having collected the bibliog-

raphy for one's thesis, improving one's ability to work in a team, being more motivated towards learning, improving one's learning skills, and increasing one's knowledge about the labour market. Other effects, which were not listed in our catalogue of answer options, were considered totally relevant by only 2.7% of our respondents. Therefore, the catalogue seems quite exhaustive.

We can observe certain similarities between the mobility motivations and self-reported effects. Improvement of one's linguistic and intercultural competencies as well as making international friends and becoming more independent were mentioned in both contexts. Improvement of one's career prospects was estimated as a higher-ranking motivation than effect, so the study period abroad might not live up to the expectations of some participants in this regard, but still it allowed to increase one's aspirations and key competencies as well as the subsequent international mobility.

The remaining international student mobility effects, which were mentioned spontaneously by our respondents, included: getting to know a different lifestyle and way of thinking; reducing one's inferiority complex in relation to other cultures; appreciating more one's own culture and way of living in Poland; having done a lot of sightseeing; opportunity to get an interesting work placement; obtaining a language certificate, which was appreciated by the employer; willingness to know other labour markets and cultures; an interesting job proposal; it is harder to accept the lack of ability to travel; appreciating better the level of studies at the home university; noticing different teaching methods; getting to know the local food and drinks; becoming more self-confident to start an academic career abroad; some employers have a negative approach to Erasmus in one's CV, because they associate it only with parties, especially in Spain; becoming happier; personal culture, optimism, positive attitude, courage in social contacts; loads of memories; having a rest from the constraints and requirements associated with studying in Poland; living and working abroad; being more experienced in teaching Polish as a foreign language; having a partner encountered during the Erasmus mobility; learning that 'impossible is nothing'; learning to enjoy oneself in various ways in a diverse company; learning to appreciate Poland in spite of various problems; starting a permanent academic cooperation; acquiring knowledge and competencies in another context – global; being more open to the world and new opportunities and inspirations; realising how miserable is the life of those who do not take part in any mobility; finding an idea of one's thesis; getting to know other education systems and ways of conducting research; getting rid of the complex of being a student from Poland as Polish universities provide a very solid theoretical basis for further achievements; getting to know the real life abroad not as a tourist; getting to know new opportunities; getting to know the regional specificity; getting to know one's parents-in-law and the family life in Turkey; working abroad; making friends with other Poles, getting to know the Polish emigration culture, and Polish catholic missions abroad; getting practical knowledge under conditions

which are not available at the home university; lower motivation to learn after the return due to a dramatic decrease in the level and interest of studying compared to the host university; believing it is possible to achieve a success if one works hard; being motivated to take part in a subsequent mobility in the framework of Leonardo; the mobility helped to be accepted for doctoral studies later on; realising that mass university education is not a good solution; feeling more Polish; noticing what is missing in Poland and what can be offered to other cultures, learning the respect for other cultures; appreciating other values and lifestyles; realising that Europeans are quite similar; returning to the host country for another purpose, including postgraduate and doctoral studies; becoming sure one wants to stay in Poland after the return; becoming proud of being Polish and willing to present one's strengths; higher self-assessment, higher propensity to face challenges, including related to changing one's place of living; becoming more aware of one's responsibility for Europe; strengthening one's faith; setting up an international family; willingness to travel and new possibilities to do it; learning how to learn foreign languages effectively; becoming more ambitious, breaking through the archaic patterns of Polish universities.

We asked our respondents to identify the most positive element of their international student mobility. 2017 study participants answered this question. Most often they mentioned learning languages, the ability to get to know another culture, international friendships, broadening one's horizons, and improving one's chances for a professional career.

As far as the least positive aspects of mobility are concerned, we received 1920 answers. Most often the respondents mentioned financial difficulties, problems with integrating the study period abroad with their study programme, and separation from one's family. Numerous respondents answered that the main problem was that the study period abroad was too short, which confirms their high level of satisfaction with the international student mobility.

Table 8.13. The evaluation of duration of international student mobility (fractions)

Mobility	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1 <sup>st</sup> time	0.000	0.003	0.015	0.413	0.134	0.127	0.301
2 <sup>nd</sup> time	0.001	0.003	0.006	0.082	0.021	0.014	0.044
3 <sup>rd</sup> time	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.019	0.002	0.002	0.006

Notes: 7 – much too long; 4 – perfect duration; 1 – much too short.

Source: own research.

Our study subjects feel their mobility period was either too short or had the right duration (Tab. 8.13). Very small fractions indicated that it was too long. Therefore, we may infer they were entirely satisfied about their international student mobility. A similar pattern of answers was observed for subsequent student mobility periods.

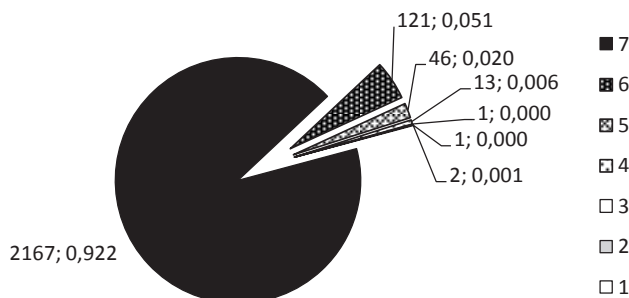
Table 8.14. The level of satisfaction with international student mobility (fractions)

Area	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
General satisfaction with one's mobility	0.669	0.209	0.079	0.027	0.003	0.001	0.002
Impact on current mobility	0.394	0.241	0.157	0.150	0.019	0.014	0.009
Utility in finding a job	0.270	0.211	0.170	0.208	0.035	0.049	0.043
Utility in acquiring basic job/learning skills	0.230	0.244	0.206	0.198	0.043	0.040	0.026

Notes: 7 – very satisfactory/useful; 1 – completely unsatisfactory/useless.

Source: own research.

Our inferences were confirmed by a straightforward assessment of one's satisfaction with the international student mobility (Tab. 8.14). More than 2/3 of our respondents indicated the highest possible level of general satisfaction. The study subjects were a little less enthusiastic in their evaluations of the mobility effects, including the impact on current mobility, its utility in finding a job and its utility in acquiring basic job or learning skills. Nevertheless, positive assessments prevail largely over negative feelings.



Notes: 7 – definitely yes, 1 – definitely not

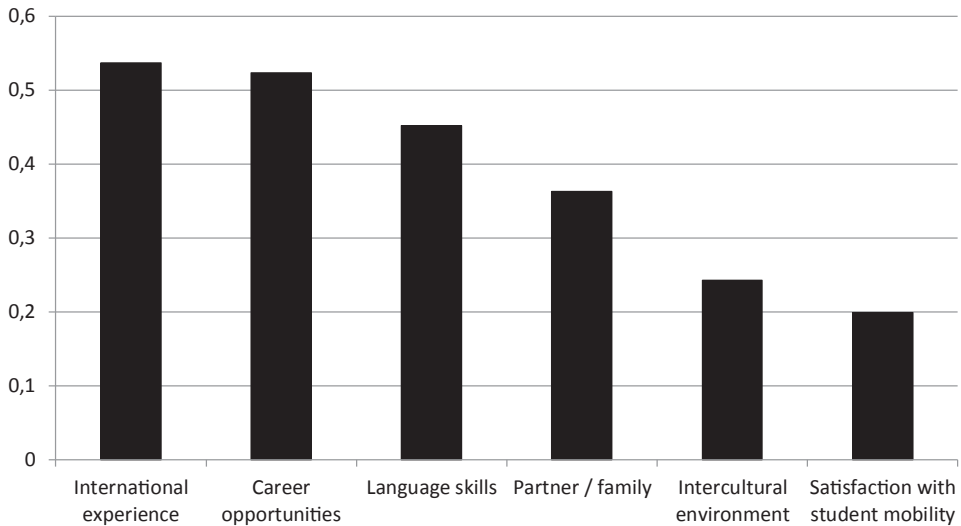
Figure 8.8. Willingness to recommend international student mobility (absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

The high satisfaction level was also reflected in answers to the subsequent question whether one would recommend participation in international student mobility to one's friends (Fig. 8.8). More than 90% of the study subjects had no doubts they would recommend such an experience to their friends.

23.0% of the study subjects reported their study abroad period led to a longer stay in the host country. The extension resulted from: personal reasons (239 answers), continuing studies abroad (209), taking up a job (199), starting a traineeship (126), and relocation to a new main place of residence (47).

As much as  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the study subjects reported they were living abroad at the time of the survey. Abroad was defined as a place which was different from where the respondents had grown up and where they had done most of their education. In the control group of former students who did not take part in international mobility, only 12.3%, i.e. a half of the share observed among former Erasmus students, reported living abroad, which may suggest an association between international student mobility and subsequent emigration.



Note: fractions of all those who are living abroad (589 study subjects)

Figure 8.9. The principal reasons for the current decision to live abroad (fractions)

Source: own research

Table 8.15. The reasons for the current decision to live abroad (fractions)

Reason	R	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
International experience	1	0.537	0.217	0.124	0.061	0.008	0.008	0.007	0.065
Career opportunities	2	0.523	0.178	0.131	0.080	0.014	0.010	0.017	0.080
Language skills	3	0.452	0.195	0.149	0.076	0.017	0.010	0.034	0.095
Partner / family	4	0.363	0.056	0.037	0.065	0.012	0.034	0.093	0.360
An intercultural environment	5	0.243	0.178	0.231	0.114	0.032	0.020	0.083	0.114
Satisfaction with student mobility	6	0.199	0.134	0.171	0.170	0.049	0.024	0.090	0.175

Table 8.15. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Climate	7	0.136	0.078	0.102	0.129	0.049	0.048	0.239	0.229
Costs of living	8	0.109	0.059	0.124	0.180	0.073	0.063	0.180	0.222
Friends	9–10	0.083	0.056	0.119	0.139	0.041	0.054	0.158	0.346
Other reasons	9–10	0.083	0.008	0.003	0.017	0.003	0.000	0.005	0.114

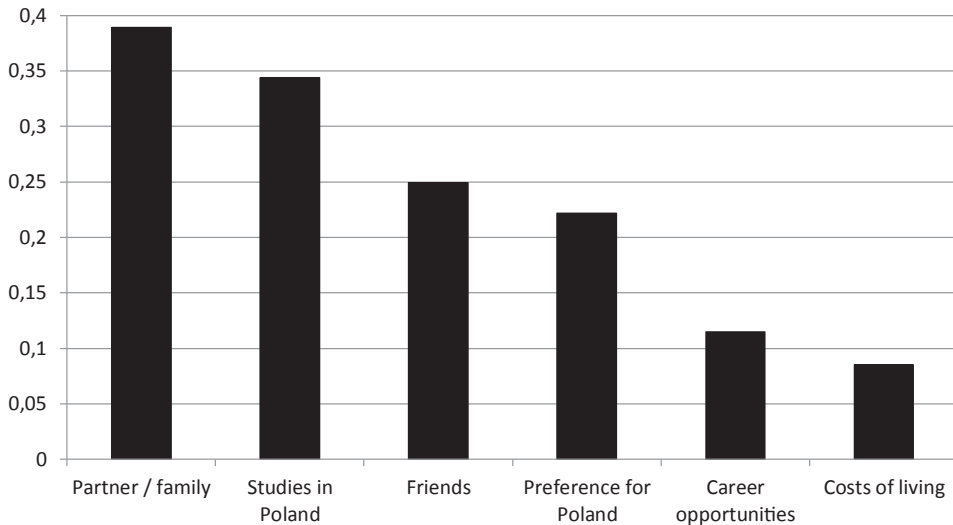
Notes: R – rank; 7 – very important; 1 – not important, NA – not applicable; fractions of all those who are living abroad (589 study subjects).

Source: own research.

We asked our respondents why they had decided to live abroad (Fig. 8.9, Tab.8.15). More than a half of those who were living abroad mentioned international experience and career opportunities as very important reasons for their decision. However, the first answer may be interpreted both as having an international experience and a desire to gain an international experience. The third rank was taken by language skills, which seems also a bit ambiguous, as it may mean having the right command of the foreign language or a willingness to improve one's language competencies. The following positions concerned the partner or family, living in an intercultural environment and being satisfied with one's international student mobility, which confirms the link between the two kinds of mobility. Less important reasons included: the climate, costs of living, and friends. Other reasons were considered very important by 8.3% of the respondents who were living abroad. To sum up, path dependency in international mobility, career prospects and language competence seem to matter the most.

The additional reasons mentioned spontaneously by the respondents included: lack of employment opportunities in the home country; education; a generous unemployment benefit; better salary; the quality of life; doctoral studies abroad; the socio-cultural climate in Poland; a more developed scientific discipline; a more friendly and tolerant society; living abroad is like in Poland; development opportunities; fair working rules and remuneration; possibility of a future career in Poland thanks to experiences accumulated abroad; opportunity to complete a specialisation; taking advantage of opportunities while one is young and without commitments; low level of the doctoral scholarship in Poland; a job offer abroad provided by a Polish employer; to be free; need for change and travelling; great conditions of work; family problems in Poland; spending most of the year abroad while working for a Polish employer; staying after one's holidays; feeling more appreciated as an employee and as a person; earning one's living independent of the place of residence – working at home.





Note: fractions of all those who are not living abroad (1780 study subjects)  
 Figure 8.10. The principal reasons for the decision not to live abroad (fractions)  
 Source: own research

Table 8.16. The reasons for the decision not to live abroad (fractions)

Reason	R	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Partner / family	1	0.389	0.149	0.120	0.076	0.021	0.021	0.070	0.107
To continue studies in Poland	2	0.344	0.125	0.122	0.059	0.012	0.012	0.105	0.160
Friends	3	0.249	0.163	0.174	0.116	0.041	0.026	0.075	0.094
Preference for living in Poland	4	0.222	0.100	0.107	0.155	0.025	0.035	0.172	0.122
Career opportunities	5	0.115	0.088	0.092	0.242	0.029	0.025	0.156	0.200
Costs of living	6	0.085	0.085	0.123	0.150	0.056	0.046	0.213	0.172
Other reasons	7	0.059	0.008	0.003	0.020	0.002	0.001	0.025	0.167
Language skills	8	0.043	0.038	0.049	0.105	0.033	0.049	0.335	0.280
Climate	9	0.040	0.024	0.048	0.129	0.051	0.046	0.336	0.248
International experience	10	0.024	0.024	0.037	0.163	0.041	0.043	0.307	0.275
Lower social benefits	11	0.006	0.004	0.007	0.118	0.024	0.039	0.340	0.372
Dissatisfaction with student mobility	12	0.002	0.003	0.008	0.076	0.018	0.037	0.307	0.461

Notes: R – rank; 7 – very important; 1 – not important, NA – not applicable; fractions of all those who are not living abroad (1780 study subjects).

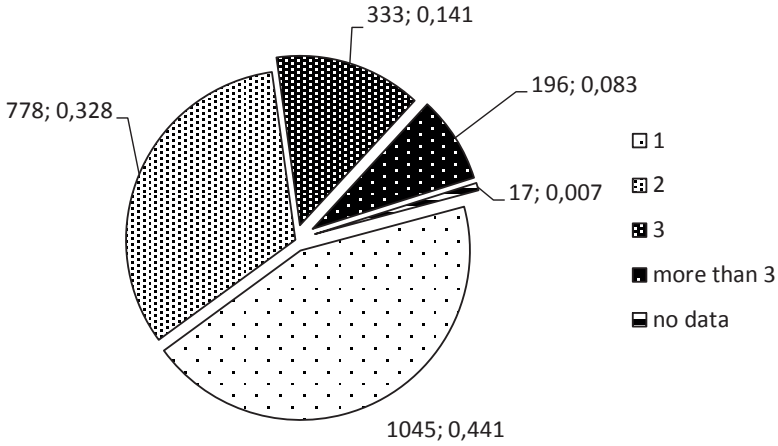
Source: own research.

The principal reasons for the decision not to live abroad were related to one's partner or family and the continuation of studies in Poland (Fig. 8.10, Tab. 8.16).

The third rank was taken by one's friends, followed by the statement that the respondents preferred living in their home country. Career opportunities and low costs of living come next. Less important explanations included: insufficient language skills and the climate. Such factors as international experience, lower social benefits, and lack of satisfaction with one's international student mobility were insignificant or irrelevant. In general, family ties, friendships and education prevent our respondents from emigration to the largest extent. Some respondents were critical towards this question and considered it strange or unclear. One person remarked that the fact that someone is not engaged in some activity need not mean that they have made an explicit decision not to do it.

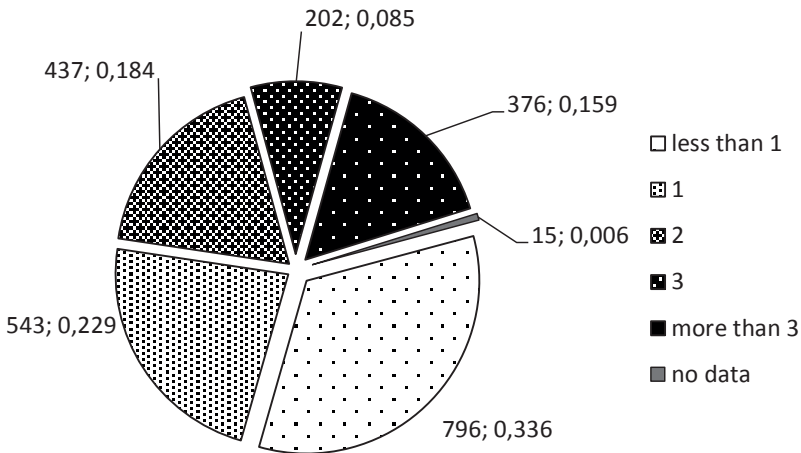
5.9% of the study subjects who were not living abroad mentioned other reasons which they considered very important. This category included: lack of courage and means; lack of professional experience, which is easier to obtain in the home country; lack of satisfactory job opportunities abroad; being afraid of something new and unknown; lack of self-confidence; staying close to one's parents in case their health condition deteriorates; collecting experiences to improve one's CV; having a job in Poland which involved frequent short journeys abroad; depression; being employed in Poland; being a lawyer qualified in Poland, which entails few job opportunities abroad; planning to go abroad, but not now; the necessity to get one's diploma recognised abroad; economic crisis in the potential destination country; a glass ceiling for immigrants who want to get a managerial position; having a job opportunity in one's family enterprise; high costs of education and living abroad; feeling as a foreigner; failing to get a scholarship; insufficient qualifications obtained in Poland; having a child; need to pass a state exam after 3 years of practice in Poland; it is easier to set up a family in the home country; lack of money to start; too large cultural differences concerning instability of relationships, the system of education and work; it is difficult to find a job abroad while being far away; being self-employed in Poland; the need to return to the home university; preferring to have a white-collar job in Poland than a blue-collar job abroad; defending one's thesis in Poland; following a career path in Poland towards a position of a judge or legal counsel; not living permanently but having some mobility spells abroad; getting an academic degree in Poland.

Among the study subjects who took part in international student mobility, 44.1% have lived in 1 foreign country, 32.8% in 2, 14.1% in 3 and 8.3% in more than 3 foreign countries (Fig. 8.11). Therefore, more than a half of the respondents lived in at least one foreign country other than the one where they spent their student mobility. It may be considered an indication of a link with subsequent international mobility spells. On the other hand, it may be a sign of a selection bias: those who are generally more mobile tend to take part in student mobility more often.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)  
 Figure 8.11. The number of foreign countries our respondents have lived in  
 (absolute numbers and fractions)  
 Source: own research

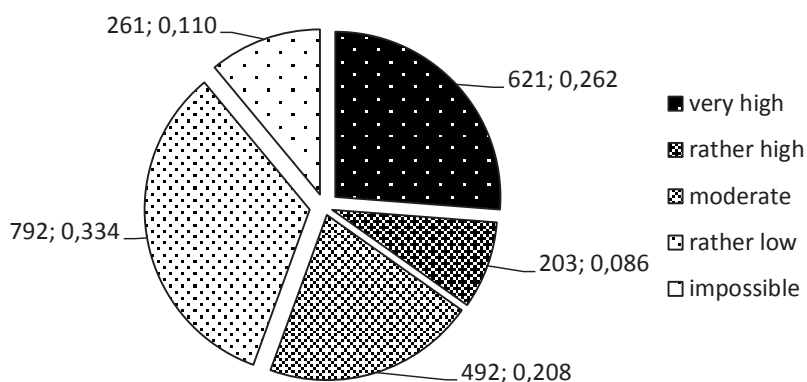
In the control group of former students without international mobility, 28.4% reported having lived in 1 foreign country, 17.3% in 2, 6.2% in 3 and 1.2% in more than 3. Therefore, our findings confirm the hypothesis that former Erasmus students tend to exhibit higher levels of international mobility later on compared to those who did not engage in international student mobility.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)  
 Figure 8.12. The total time spent abroad in years  
 (absolute numbers and fractions)  
 Source: own research

Only a third of our respondents reported having lived abroad for less than 1 year in total (Fig. 8.12). A considerable share of our respondents (more than 2/5) have spent abroad two years or more. It confirms our inferences about the propensity to be internationally mobile among those who took part in student mobility. As Erasmus mobility for studies was limited to 1 academic year maximum and usually lasted just a semester, it is reasonable to infer that our respondents were engaged in additional types of mobility. They may have taken place either before their departure for Erasmus or after their return from this kind of mobility.

As far as the control group of former students who did not engage in international student mobility is concerned, 50.6% reported having spent abroad less than a year in total, 7.4% – 1 year, 11.1% – 2 years, 2.5% – 3 years, and 4.9% – more than 3 years. These figures are well below their counterparts in the group of former international student mobility participants. It suggests a positive link between the international student mobility and the total length of time spent abroad during one's lifespan.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)

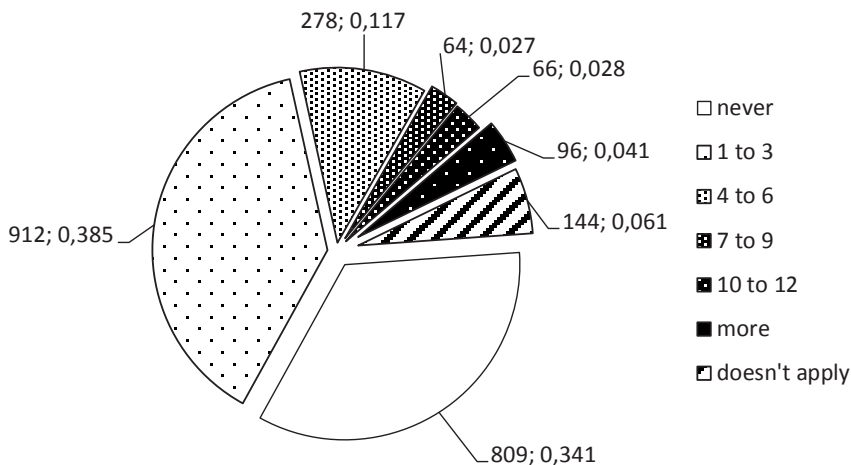
Figure 8.13. The likelihood of going to live abroad during the following year  
(absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

We asked our respondents to assess the likelihood of their going to live abroad during the following year (Fig. 8.13). Over 1/3 of the study subjects who took part in international student mobility consider their likelihood of emigrating during the following year as very high or rather high, with over 1/4 of the respondents estimating it as very high. Only 1/9 believe it is impossible for them to take such a step. Over a half consider this probability as moderate or rather low. Therefore, we may notice a whole range of attitudes towards personal emigration and international mobility in general, with a considerable segment of respondents seriously considering such a decision. However, we are not sure about the envisaged duration of such mobility.

We were curious to know the self-reported likelihood of going to live abroad during the following year in the control group as well. It was estimated as very high by 12.3% of our respondents, rather high by 4.9%, moderate by 11.1%, rather low by 50.6%, and impossible by 21.0%. Therefore, former international student mobility participants tend to report a higher probability of emigration than their colleagues who did not engage in such mobility.

90.5% of our respondents confirmed that their Erasmus exchange had had a positive impact on their opinion about Europe. Only 4.7% replied negatively to this question, and it did not apply to 4.8%. This shows that the Erasmus programme succeeded in achieving one of its principal goals of promoting European integration, at least among our Polish respondents. However, the question concerned Europe in general and not necessarily the European Union.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)

Figure 8.14. The number of subsequent visits to the Erasmus host country (absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

We wanted our respondents to say how many times they had visited their Erasmus host country after the end of their Erasmus mobility (Fig. 8.14). For almost 2/5 it was 1–3 visits, whereas about 1/3 had never returned to the host country. The rest of our respondents visited their Erasmus host country after the mobility more often. The question was not relevant for 6.1% of the study subjects who were engaged in international student mobility. Several respondents mentioned they were actually living in the Erasmus host country at the time of our enquiry.

As many as 85.4% of our respondents reported they kept in touch with their former Erasmus student friends. 13.8% answered negatively, and the question did not apply to 0.8%.

Table 8.17. The ways of keeping in touch with former Erasmus friends (fractions)

Contacts	R	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Social networking website communication	1	0.576	0.114	0.064	0.031	0.012	0.010	0.033
E-mails	2	0.250	0.137	0.137	0.092	0.054	0.060	0.097
Face-to-face contacts	3	0.117	0.073	0.126	0.106	0.098	0.118	0.182
Phone calls	4	0.054	0.044	0.082	0.076	0.071	0.121	0.344
Other	5	0.027	0.012	0.011	0.014	0.002	0.004	0.113

Notes: 7 – the most frequent; 1 – the least frequent or none; R – rank.

Source: own research.

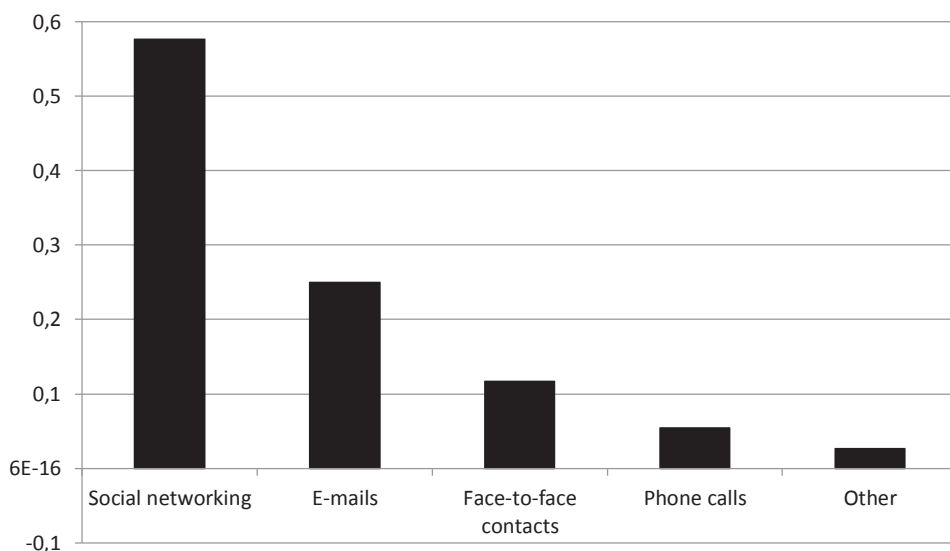


Figure 8.15. The most frequent ways of keeping in touch with former Erasmus friends (fractions)

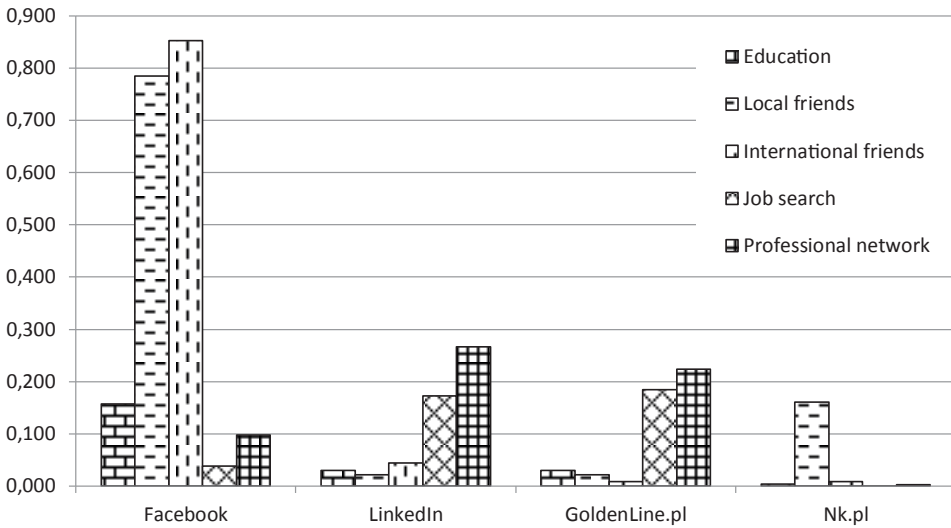
Source: own research

We asked the Polish respondents how they kept in touch with their former Erasmus friends (Tab. 8.17, Fig. 8.15). Unsurprisingly, it is the social networking website communication that largely prevails as the most frequent communication channel. Almost 2/5 of the study subjects considered it to be the most used in this context. It was followed by e-mails. Face-to-face contacts and phone calls play a much less important role in this regard. The other options mentioned spontaneously by some respondents included Internet chats (including Skype and MSN), holiday postcards, traditional letters, text short messages sent by phone (SMS), and common journeys. However, the key role of online social networking should be emphasised.

Table 8.18. The use of online social networks by purpose (fractions)

Social networking website	Purposes				
	Educational	Socialising with local friends	Socialising with international friends	Job searching	Professional network
Facebook	0.157	0.784	0.852	0.038	0.098
LinkedIn	0.030	0.022	0.044	0.173	0.266
Twitter	0.013	0.011	0.015	0.003	0.016
MySpace	0.006	0.004	0.010	0.001	0.003
MyYearbook	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
SunSpace	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.003	0.005
GoldenLine.pl	0.030	0.022	0.008	0.184	0.223
Nk.pl	0.004	0.161	0.009	0.001	0.003
Xing	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.008	0.010
Tuenti	0.001	0.001	0.005	0.000	0.000
Other	0.005	0.006	0.010	0.003	0.008

Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects).  
Source: own research.



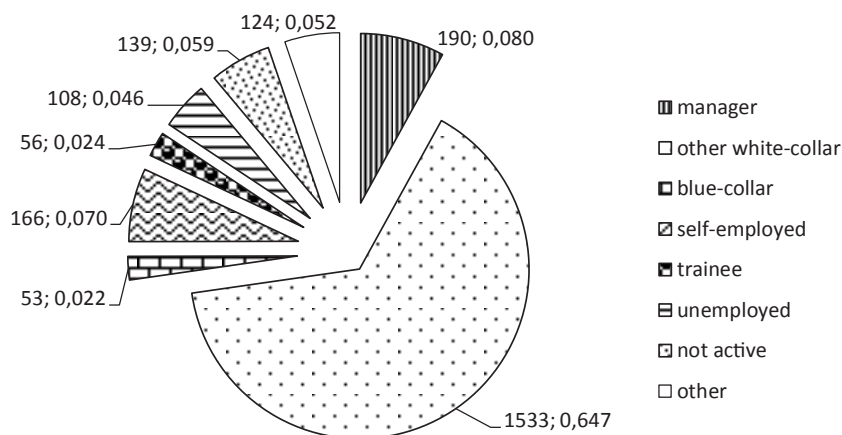
Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)  
Figure 8.16. The use of principal online social networks by purpose (fractions)  
Source: own research

We were interested in the patterns of use of social networking websites among our respondents (Tab. 8.18, Fig. 8.16). Although 10 social networks were

included in the catalogue of answers, it turned out that only 4 of them played a significant role in our sample. The most popular was Facebook, which was number one in socialising with both local and international friends. LinkedIn was reported to serve mainly for professional purposes, including job searching and maintaining a professional network. The same was true for a Polish social network called GoldenLine.pl, the popularity of which was similar to LinkedIn. The fourth website called Nk.pl was used to keep in touch with local friends. We may expect that the popularity of global social networks will grow much more dynamically than their national counterparts. Twitter obtained less than 2% of users in each purpose category, but its prospects seem favourable. Educational purposes were not very common for any network, with the highest share of Facebook. The other online networks included in our question (MySpace, MyYearbook, SunSpace, Xing, and Tuenti) received only marginal attention (all functions below 1%). The respondents could supplement the catalogue with other networks they used, but very few took advantage of this possibility, which suggests that our analysis is complete. The few spontaneous additions included: Academia, Couchsurfing, Draugiem.lv, Google+, MeetUp, Mendeley, Netlog, Pinterest, Pracuj.pl, Profeo.pl, Reddit, Research Gate, StudiVZ, Tumblr, Viadeo, Vkontakte.ru.

As many as 514 our respondents, i.e. 21.7%, said they had created a group in a social networking website to keep in touch with former Erasmus student friends. 73.7% answered negatively and 3.7% mentioned it did not apply.

In the control group, Facebook is much more often used to keep in touch with local friends (72.8%) than with international friends (53.1%). It indicates an impact of the former international student mobility on the intensity as well as patterns of use of social networks.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)

Figure 8.17. The current job position of former international student mobility participants (absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research



We wanted to know the current job position of our study subjects who had taken part in international student mobility (Fig. 8.17). It turned out that a vast majority of them (almost 2/3) had a white-collar job, with additional 8% holding managerial positions. There were 7% of self-employed in our sample. Blue-collar workers constituted 2.2%, which stems from the fact that we investigated only university graduates who were highly qualified and attractive on the labour market. There were 2.4% of trainees. Less than 5% reported unemployment, which is a very good result taking into account the situation of their age cohorts on the Polish labour market. Almost 6% were not active on the labour market as students or full-time parents, and 5% considered their job situation did not fall in any listed category, but taking into account their detailed answers, they could usually be added to the remaining categories, especially white-collar workers, self-employed, and not active on the labour market. A few performed voluntary jobs or reported working on the basis of civil law contracts instead of classical labour law arrangements (usually because of the desire of employers to avoid high obligatory social security contributions). The professional situation of respondents from the control group turned out to be even slightly better, which might be a bit surprising, but we must take into account their high competencies, including proficiency in foreign languages.

Only 1.6% of the former international student mobility participants mentioned they had never worked (compared to 2.5% in the control group). Therefore, most of those who were unemployed or inactive at the time of our survey had had some professional experience, which may be considered a very positive phenomenon. The most serious is long-term unemployment and lack of activity. Some spells of these are inevitable.

Surprisingly, as much as 68.6% reported that they had worked abroad. This may be an indication of the link between international student mobility and international professional mobility. Perhaps, a considerable share of the responses concerned simultaneous working and studying abroad. In the control group, this figure was also rather high – 53.1%, probably because it comprised only graduates of international studies, who had a much higher command of foreign languages than the average Polish student.

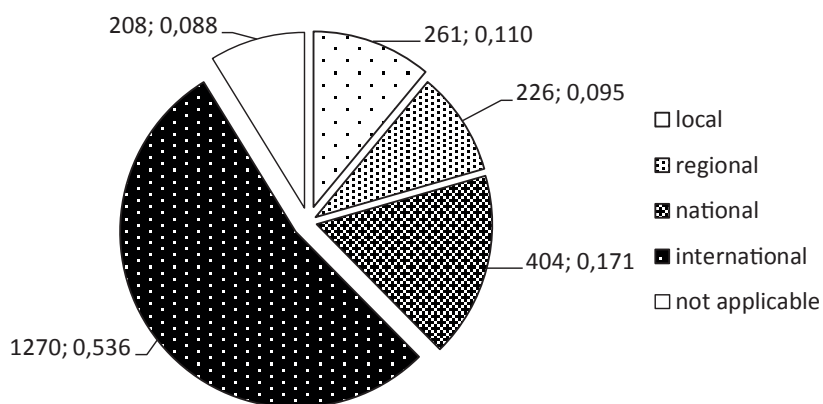
Among those who worked, 50.8% had a permanent job contract, 28.1% a fixed-term contract, and 21.1% another type of contract. The average duration of fixed-term contracts amounted to 21 months, and the median was 12 months (Tab. 8.19). The duration of fixed-term contracts ranged from 1 month to 10 years. However,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the respondents with such a contract had it for 2 years or less. The other types of contract included: contracts to perform a task (civil law contracts), temporary job agency, research grant, medical traineeship, doctoral scholarship, self-employment, freelancing, apprenticeship, traineeship, teleworking, probation period, substitute job, undeclared work. In the control group, the share of those with permanent job contracts was a bit lower at 43.2%, which indicates

a lower level of job stability than among former international student mobility participants. The average duration of fixed-term contracts in this group was 18.8 months (a bit less than in the main sample), while the first quartile, median and third quartile were the same as among former international student mobility participants.

Table 8.19. The duration of fixed-term job contracts among former international student mobility participants (in months)

Descriptive statistics	Value
Mean	21.334
Standard Deviation	18.593
Variance	0.872
Minimum	1
1 <sup>st</sup> quartile	12
Median	12
3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile	24
Maximum	120
Skewness	1.887
Kurtosis	4.734

Source: own research.



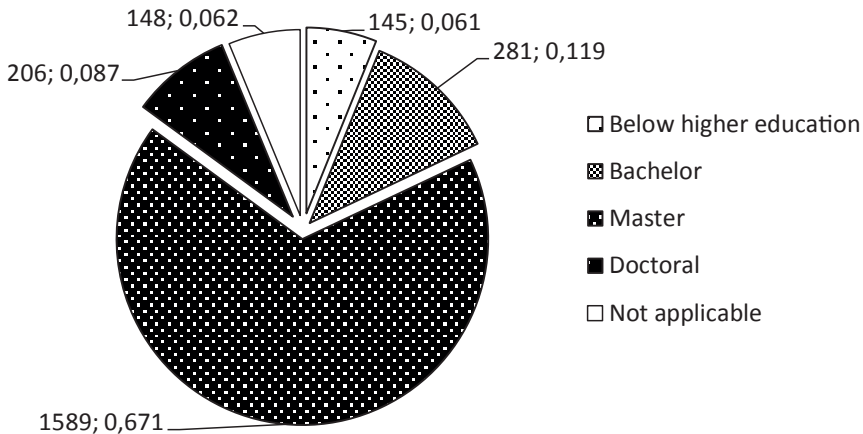
Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)

Figure 8.18. The scope of operations of the respondent's organisation (absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

We asked our respondents to define the scope of operations of their organisations (where they worked) (Fig. 8.18). It turned out that the majority of former international student mobility participants were engaged in organisations with an international remit of activities. This may suggest certain association between the international student mobility and the selection of the future career path. There may be some additional factors influencing this result, especially the self-selection bias. Those students who take part in international mobility tend to know foreign languages better, and therefore, are more attractive for companies having an international scope of operations. Nevertheless, we may infer certain connection between these two elements. If former Erasmus students do not work abroad, they may still make use of their skills in an international organisation located in their country of origin.

In the control group, the respondents who had not engaged in international student mobility defined the scope of operations of their organisations as follows: local – 13.6%, regional – 12.3%, national – 22.2%, and international – 48.1%. Even though the control group was composed of former students of international relations, it turned out their organisations were less international compared to former international student mobility participants representing all possible field of studies. If we examined graduates from other fields of studies who had not taken part in international student mobility, this difference would probably be much more pronounced, which suggests a link between the international student mobility and the level of internationalisation of the future employer.

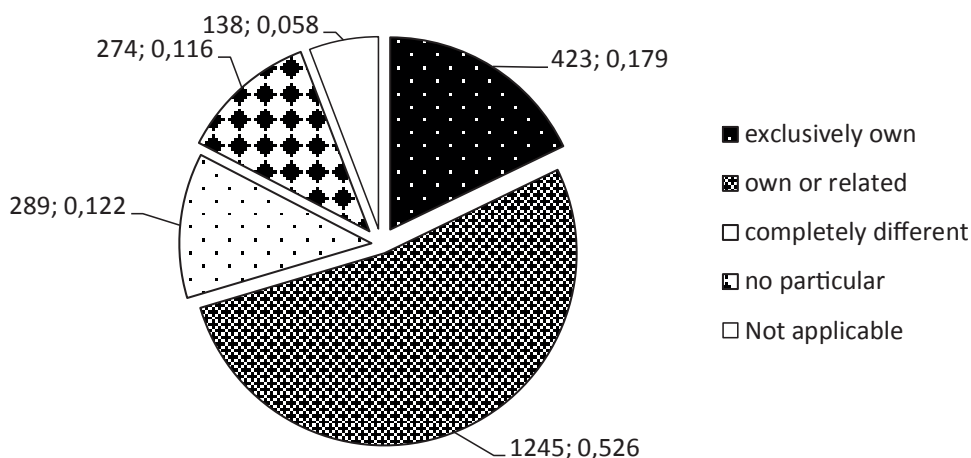


Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)  
 Figure 8.19. The level of education felt by respondents to be appropriate for their work  
 (absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

We were interested in the self-perceived congruence of the respondents' work with their education level. Over 2/3 of the study subjects believe the most appropriate education level for their job is Master (Fig. 8.19), whereas only 6.1% consider that higher education is not appropriate for the job they perform. It is worth mentioning the relatively high share of doctoral qualifications felt as the most appropriate (8.7%), which suggests good quality, highly demanding jobs in our sample. The relative share of Bachelor and Master requirements may result partly from the Polish tradition of university education. Only recently was the division into two levels of studies introduced. Previously, we had the model of continuous 5-year university education leading to a Master degree (with some minor exceptions like medicine, which lasts 6 years).

In the control group, there were following perceptions of the appropriateness of education level for the current job: below higher education – 11.1%, Bachelor – 11.1%, Master – 65.4%, doctoral – 9.9%. Therefore the distribution of answers was quite similar to that in the main sample.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)

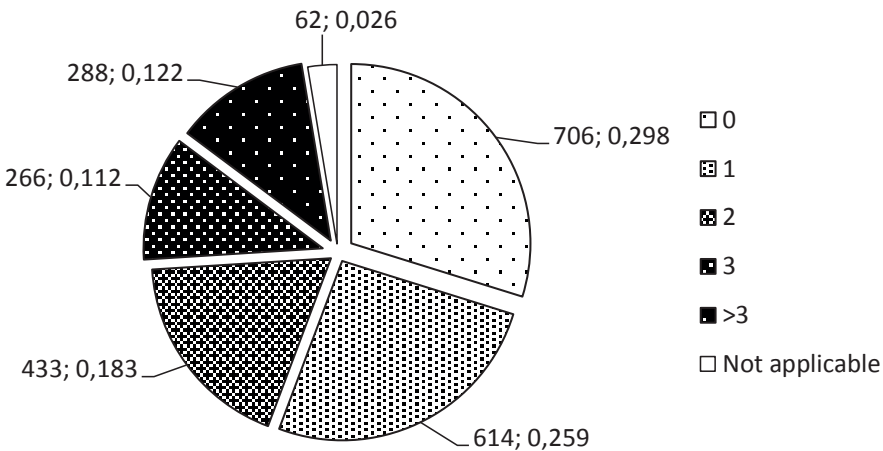
Figure 8.20. The field of studies felt by respondents to be appropriate for their work (absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

We wanted to get to know if the field of studies of our respondents was congruent with their job (Fig. 8.20). The majority of the study subjects felt that their own or related field of studies corresponded well with their work. 1/6 believed that exclusively their own field of studies was appropriate. 12.2% reported that a completely different field of studies would be better, and 11.4% considered there was no particular field of studies appropriate for their work. These results

indicate a rather strong congruence between the field of studies of our respondents and their subsequent professional career. It confirms a generally traditional view of one’s career path, where early specialisation choices matter. However, there is also a considerable segment of respondents who either had difficulties in finding an appropriate job or perhaps got a job on the basis of other competencies than formal university education. The share of jobs with strictly predetermined education requirements turned out to be rather low, which suggests a certain level of flexibility on the part of employers and the importance of additional criteria in the recruitment process.

In the control group, 6.2% of respondents indicated that only their own field of study was the most appropriate for their current job, which was significantly less than in the main sample. It may suggest that proportionately more former Erasmus students perform jobs dependent on their university education choices. 45.7% replied that it was their own field of study or a similar one, 25.9% believed that it should be a completely different field, and 19.8% thought there was no particular field of studies necessary for their current job. The share of answers in the last two categories was much higher than among former international student mobility participants. It may indicate a weaker fit between the university education profile and current professional career among those who did not engage in international student mobility.



Note: fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects)

Figure 8.21. The number of times our respondents changed their jobs (absolute numbers and fractions)

Source: own research

The former international student mobility participants were asked how many times they had changed their jobs (Fig. 8.21). Below 30% reported no chang-

es, because either they kept the same job throughout their career or they were not employed at all. More than  $\frac{1}{4}$  said they had changed their job once, 18.3% twice. More than  $\frac{1}{3}$  had already changed their job three times or more. Therefore, we observed a significant level of professional mobility in our sample, especially that the respondents were fairly young. The link between student mobility and subsequent professional mobility is not clear, but our results confirm the co-existence of both phenomena in our sample.

As far as graduates who did not take part in international student mobility are concerned, almost  $\frac{1}{5}$  (19.8%) mentioned they had never changed their job. It was a smaller share compared to the main sample, which may support the hypothesis that Erasmus (and other kinds of international student mobility) leads to a higher level of job security in future careers. In the control group, 30.9% of the respondents reported having changed their job once, 19.8% – twice, 16.0% – three times, and 12.3% – more often.

Table 8.20. The self-reported determinants of one's career or job position (fractions)

Reason	R	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Higher education	1	0.579	0.165	0.095	0.064	0.012	0.007	0.033	0.017
Foreign language proficiency	2	0.560	0.157	0.108	0.065	0.014	0.012	0.046	0.013
International experience	3	0.332	0.198	0.173	0.149	0.017	0.014	0.068	0.023
Erasmus mobility for studies	4	0.194	0.191	0.203	0.198	0.030	0.027	0.095	0.029
Family/friends	5	0.116	0.097	0.137	0.149	0.035	0.030	0.176	0.202
Other mobility programmes	6	0.064	0.039	0.051	0.098	0.019	0.013	0.074	0.538
Erasmus work placement mobility	7	0.060	0.039	0.050	0.092	0.013	0.011	0.072	0.556
Other factors	8	0.027	0.005	0.001	0.016	0.003	0.000	0.011	0.191

Notes: R – rank; 7 – very important; 1 – not important, NA – not applicable; fractions of all those who took part in international student mobility (2369 study subjects).

Source: own research.

We wanted our respondents to estimate the importance of selected factors for their career development and job position (Tab. 8.20, Fig. 8.22). Higher education and proficiency in foreign languages were judged very important by the majority of our study subjects.  $\frac{1}{3}$  of former international student mobility participants considered international experience to have a very important influence on their professional development and position. Almost  $\frac{1}{5}$  specified Erasmus mobility

for studies as a key factor in this regard. Objective qualifications were much more important than informal support from one's family or friends in obtaining the job position. Other mobility programmes and Erasmus mobility for a work placement had a smaller influence, partly because of our sampling method.

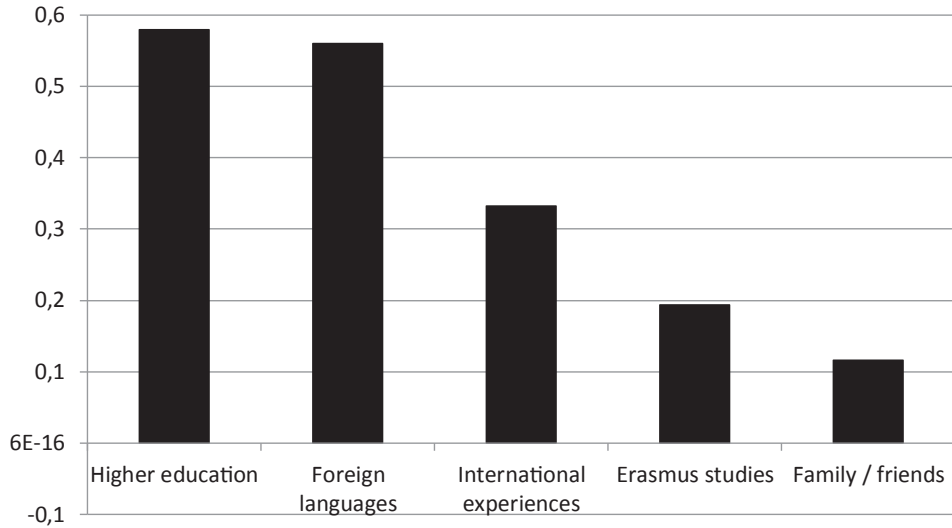


Figure 8.22. The principal self-reported determinants of one's career (fractions)  
Source: own research

The respondents were free to provide additional determinants of their career. They mentioned: activity in student organisations; ambition; good quality secondary school; willingness to continue a family business; personality traits; self-confidence; professional experience; chance; thirst for experiences; interests; passions; proficiency in Excel software; qualifications as an accountant; working abroad for a few months several times; contact with the employer during one's studies; contacts established during one's studies; professional skills; marriage which led to emigration; situation on the labour market – the employers look for those who stay in Poland and are faithful to their company; self-learning; negative experiences from one's previous job; traineeship; money; joining one's partner; field of education; persistence in reaching one's goals; testing oneself; postgraduate studies; interpersonal abilities; additional trainings; improving one's competencies; specialisation as a legal advisor; voluntary jobs; technical skills; participation in the Work&Travel programme in the USA; respect from the employer abroad; knowledge of the industry. The other factors were considered very important by less than 3% of the study subjects.

Table 8.21. Principal quantitative results of MERGE in Poland by sex

Variable	Categories	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
Number of study subjects who stayed abroad for at least a semester or trimester		657	1708
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY EXPERIENCE			
Frequency of study period abroad (%)	Once Twice	83.0 13.1	82.5 15.0
Level of study the respondent took part in international mobility (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	20.4 78.1 5.9	23.1 78.3 4.2
Ranking of destination countries for the student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Germany Denmark UK	Germany Spain France
Ranking of languages studied abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	English (83.3%) German (14.8%) Spanish (7.9%)	English (71.4%) German (16.5%) French (11.4%)
Ranking of international student mobility motivations	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	New experiences Language skills Culture	New experiences Language skills Culture
Ranking of self-reported effects of international student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Other language skills Host language skills International friends	Host language skills International friends Other language skills
Evaluation of duration of international student mobility (1 <sup>st</sup> time) (%)	Long Perfect duration Short	2.1 40.8 56.5	1.8 41.5 56.1
Evaluation of experience abroad overall (7 Satisfactory/Useful - 1 Unsatisfactory/Useless)	Overall satisfaction Impact on mobility Utility in finding a job Utility in acquiring learning skills	6.5 5.8 5.3 5.2	6.5 5.8 5.1 5.2



Table 8.21. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Study abroad period led to a longer stay in the host country (%)	YES	20.4	24.1
CURRENT SITUATION: MOBILITY PATTERNS			
Proportion of respondents currently living abroad (%)	YES	22.8	25.7
Ranking of reasons for living abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Career opportunities International experience Language skills	International experience Career opportunities Language skills
Ranking of reasons for staying in home country	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Partner/family Continue studies at home Prefer living in their home country	Partner/family Continue studies at home Friends
Years lived abroad (%)	<1 1 2 3 >3	30.9 24.7 19.0 9.0 16.0	34.7 22.2 18.1 8.4 15.8
Likelihood of going to live abroad during the following year (%)	Very high Rather high Moderate Rather Low Impossible	24.7 9.7 23.0 32.1 10.5	26.8 8.1 19.9 34.0 11.2
Positive impact of Erasmus exchange on opinion about Europe (%)	YES	87.5	91.6
Frequency of visits to the host country after the student mobility (%)	Never 1-3 times 4-6 times 7-9 times 10-12 times	37.7 37.7 11.1 1.1 3.3	32.7 38.8 12.0 3.3 2.6

Maintaining contact with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES	80.8	87.1
Ranking of ways of keeping in touch with former Erasmus friends	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts
Ranking of more used online social networks by purpose	Education Local friends International friends Job search Professional network	Facebook Facebook Facebook LinkedIn LinkedIn	Facebook Facebook Facebook GoldenLine.pl LinkedIn
Creating a group in a social networking website to keep in touch with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES	19.2	22.7
<b>CURRENT SITUATION: EMPLOYABILITY PATTERNS</b>			
Ranking of current job position of former international student mobility participants	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	White-collar (skilled labour) Managerial Self-employed	White-collar (skilled labour) Inactive Managerial
Have ever worked (%)	YES	98.6	98.2
Have worked abroad (%)	YES	68.6	68.6
Type of contract (%)	Unlimited Fixed-term	52.2 22.4	44.8 27.3
Scope of operations of your work organization (%)	International National Regional Local	57.5 16.9 11.0 8.2	52.0 17.2 9.0 12.1
Type of education most appropriate for your work (%)	Doctoral Master Bachelor Lower than higher education	10.5 68.2 10.4 6.7	8.0 66.7 12.5 5.9

Table 8.21. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Subject of study appropriate for your work (%)	Exclusively my own subject My own subject or related A completely different subject No particular subject	20.4 57.8 8.5 9.6	16.9 50.6 13.6 12.3
Frequency of changing the job (%)	0 1 2 3 >3	30.7 26.8 16.0 11.0 13.4	29.4 25.5 19.2 11.3 11.7
Ranking of determinants of one's career or job position	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Higher education Foreign language International experience	Higher education Foreign language International experience
<b>SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA</b>			
Maximum educational qualification (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	5.3 85.5 2.4	5.0 88.2 1.8
Ranking of subjects of studies	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Science, mathematics, computing Engineering, manufacturing Humanities and Arts / Management	Humanities and Arts Social studies Management
Maximum educational qualification of the participant's parents (most often)	Mother Father	Master Master	Master Master
Participant's family members / friends who are currently living abroad (%)	YES	81.7	84.8

Source: own research.

Table 8.22. Principal quantitative results of MERGE in Poland by the level of parents' education

Variable	Categories	Having both parents with higher education	Having both parents without higher education
1	2	3	4
Number of study subjects who stayed abroad for at least a semester or trimester		937	813
<b>INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY EXPERIENCE</b>			
Frequency of study period abroad (%)	Once Twice	80.5 16.4	86.0 11.6
Level of study the respondent took part in international mobility (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	18.1 82.3 5.3	25.5 73.1 4.2
Ranking of destination countries for the student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Germany France Spain	Germany Denmark Spain
Ranking of languages studied abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	English German French	English German French
Ranking of international student mobility motivations	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	New experiences Language skills Culture	New experiences Language skills Culture
Ranking of self-reported effects of international student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Host language skills International friends Other language skills	International friends Host language skills Other language skills
Evaluation of duration of international student mobility (1st time) (%)	Long Perfect duration Short	1.5 42.9 55.2	1.6 41.9 55.8
Evaluation of experience abroad overall (7 Satisfactory/Useful - 1 Unsatisfactory/Useless)	Overall satisfaction Impact on mobility Utility in finding a job Utility in acquiring learning skills	6.5 5.8 5.2 5.2	6.5 5.7 5.0 5.1

Table 8.22. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Study abroad period led to a longer stay in the host country (%)	YES	25.3	20.0
CURRENT SITUATION: MOBILITY PATTERNS			
Proportion of respondents currently living abroad (%)	YES	25.1	24.6
Ranking of reasons for living abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	International experience Career opportunities Language skills	International experience Career opportunities Language skills
Ranking of reasons for staying in home country	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Partner/family Continue studies at home Friends	Partner/family Continue studies at home Friends
Years lived abroad (%)	<1 1 2 3 >3	30.8 22.1 21.7 9.3 15.9	37.0 22.6 15.1 8.5 15.7
Likelihood of going to live abroad during the following year (%)	Very high Rather high Moderate Rather Low Impossible	27.0 8.5 21.1 33.1 10.2	25.3 8.7 19.2 34.4 12.3
Positive impact of Erasmus exchange on opinion about Europe (%)	YES	88.7	92.5
Frequency of visits to the host country after the student mobility (%)	Never 1-3 times 4-6 times 7-9 times 10-12 times	30.4 39.8 13.3 3.4 3.3	39.2 37.4 9.8 1.4 2.0

Maintaining contact with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES		85.7
Ranking of ways of keeping in touch with former Erasmus friends	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts
Ranking of more used online social networks by purpose	Education Local friends International friends Job search Professional network	Facebook Facebook Facebook LinkedIn LinkedIn	Facebook Facebook Facebook GoldenLine.pl LinkedIn
Creating a group in a social networking website to keep in touch with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES		23.7
<b>CURRENT SITUATION: EMPLOYABILITY PATTERNS</b>			
Ranking of current job position of former international student mobility participants	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	White-collar (skilled labour) Self-employed Managerial	White-collar (skilled labour) Managerial Inactive
Have ever worked (%)	YES		98.0
Have worked abroad (%)	YES		68.3
Type of contract (%)	Unlimited Fixed-term		48.6 26.0
Scope of operations of your work organization (%)	International National Regional Local		51.7 16.9 9.3 12.3
Type of education most appropriate for your work (%)	Doctoral Master Bachelor Lower than higher education		6.2 66.3 13.3 7.7

Table 8.22. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Subject of study appropriate for your work (%)	Exclusively my own subject My own subject or related A completely different subject No particular subject	20.7 52.5 10.0 11.2	13.7 53.4 14.3 12.5
Frequency of changing the job (%)	0 1 2 3 >3	30.3 29.1 18.4 9.8 10.4	29.6 22.8 18.1 12.1 13.9
Ranking of determinants of one's career or job position	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Higher education Foreign language International experience	Higher education Foreign language International experience
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA			
Sex	Male Female	29.8 70.2	26.6 73.4
Maximum educational qualification (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	3.5 90.4 1.8	6.6 85.6 2.3
Ranking of subjects of studies	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Humanities and Arts Social studies Science, mathematics, computing	Humanities and Arts Social studies Science, mathematics, computing
Maximum educational qualification of the participant's parents (most often)	Mother Father	Master Master	Secondary Secondary
Participant's family members/ friends who are currently living abroad (%)	YES	85.1	82.9

Note: there is also a group of study subjects having only 1 parent with higher education, which is not included in the table above.  
Source: own research.

Table 8.23. Principal quantitative results of MERGE in Poland by the current place of residence

Variable	Categories	Living abroad	Living in Poland
1	2	3	4
Number of study subjects who stayed abroad for at least a semester or trimester		589	1780
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY EXPERIENCE			
Frequency of study period abroad (%)	Once Twice	66.4 26.7	88.0 10.5
Level of study the respondent took part in international mobility (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	26.1 79.5 9.7	21.1 77.8 3.0
Ranking of destination countries for the student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Germany France Denmark	Germany Spain France
Ranking of languages studied abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	English German French	English German Spanish
Ranking of international student mobility motivations	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	New experiences Language skills Culture	New experiences Language skills Culture
Ranking of self-reported effects of international student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	International friends Host language skills Other language skills	Host language skills International friends Other language skills
Evaluation of duration of international student mobility (1st time) (%)	Long Perfect duration Short	1.9 48.2 49.2	1.8 39.0 58.6
Evaluation of experience abroad overall (7 Satisfactory/Useful – 1 Unsatisfactory/Useless)	Overall satisfaction Impact on mobility Utility in finding a job Utility in acquiring learning skills	6.6 6.4 5.7 5.6	6.5 5.7 5.0 5.1



Table 8.23. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Study abroad period led to a longer stay in the host country (%)	YES	43.5	16.3
CURRENT SITUATION: MOBILITY PATTERNS			
Proportion of respondents currently living abroad (%)	YES	100.0	0
Ranking of reasons for living abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	International experience Career opportunities Language skills	n.a.
Ranking of reasons for staying in home country	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	n.a.	Partner/family Continue studies at home Friends
Years lived abroad (%)	<1 1 2 3 >3	4.2 6.5 17.8 18.3 52.6	43.3 28.4 18.7 5.3 3.7
Likelihood of going to live abroad during the following year (%)	Very high Rather high Moderate Rather Low Impossible	86.6 4.6 5.3 2.9 0.7	6.2 9.9 25.9 43.5 14.4
Positive impact of Erasmus exchange on opinion about Europe (%)	YES	91.5	90.1
Frequency of visits to the host country after the student mobility (%)	Never 1-3 times 4-6 times 7-9 times 10-12 times	22.1 29.2 10.5 1.9 5.1	38.1 41.6 12.1 3.0 2.0

Maintaining contact with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES	86.4	85.1
Ranking of ways of keeping in touch with former Erasmus friends	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Education Local friends International friends Job search Professional network	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts Facebook Facebook Facebook LinkedIn LinkedIn	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts Facebook Facebook Facebook GoldenLine.pl GoldenLine.pl
Ranking of more used online social networks by purpose			
Creating a group in a social networking website to keep in touch with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES	21.7	21.7
<b>CURRENT SITUATION: EMPLOYABILITY PATTERNS</b>			
Ranking of current job position of former international student mobility participants	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> YES YES Unlimited Fixed-term International National Regional Local Doctoral Master Bachelor Lower than higher education	White-collar (skilled labour) Managerial Inactive 98.1 93.0 43.5 32.1 63.5 10.7 5.1 11.4 11.0 58.4 14.3 9.8	White-collar (skilled labour) Managerial Self-employed 98.4 60.6 48.0 23.9 50.3 19.2 11.0 10.9 7.9 69.9 11.1 4.9
Have ever worked (%)	YES	98.1	98.4
Have worked abroad (%)	YES	93.0	60.6
Type of contract (%)	Unlimited Fixed-term	43.5 32.1	48.0 23.9
Scope of operations of your work organization (%)	International National Regional Local	63.5 10.7 5.1 11.4	50.3 19.2 11.0 10.9
Type of education most appropriate for your work (%)	Doctoral Master Bachelor Lower than higher education	11.0 58.4 14.3 9.8	7.9 69.9 11.1 4.9

Table 8.23. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Subject of study appropriate for your work (%)	Exclusively my own subject My own subject or related A completely different subject No particular subject	16.0 55.3 8.8 14.3	18.5 51.6 13.3 10.7
Frequency of changing the job (%)	0 1 2 3 >3	27.3 22.6 18.7 13.6 15.8	30.6 27.0 18.1 10.4 11.0
Ranking of determinants of one's career or job position	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Foreign language Higher education International experience	Higher education Foreign language International experience
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA			
Sex	Male Female	25.5 74.5	28.5 71.5
Maximum educational qualification (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	6.5 86.8 2.7	4.6 87.8 1.7
Ranking of subjects of studies	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Science, mathematics, computing Humanities and Arts Social studies	Humanities and Arts Social studies Management
Maximum educational qualification of the participant's parents (most often)	Mother Father	Master Master	Master Master
Participant's family members/ friends who are currently living abroad (%)	YES	83.4	84.2

Source: own research.

Table 8.24. Principal quantitative results of MERGE in Poland by the type of education

Variable	Categories	Education: humanities and arts, social studies, education, management, law and administration	Education: science, maths, computer science, engineering, construction, health, social care, agriculture, veterinary studies, services
1	2	3	4
Number of study subjects who stayed abroad for at least a semester or trimester		1226	698
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY EXPERIENCE			
Frequency of study period abroad (%)	Once Twice	81.7 15.7	82.7 14.0
Level of study the respondent took part in international mobility (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	26.2 76.8 3.0	17.9 79.9 7.7
Ranking of destination countries for the student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Germany France Spain	Denmark Germany Spain
Ranking of languages studied abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	English German French	English German Spanish
Ranking of international student mobility motivations	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	New experiences Language skills Culture	New experiences Language skills Culture
Ranking of self-reported effects of international student mobility	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Host language skills International friends Other language skills	Other language skills International friends Host language skills

Table 8.24. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Evaluation of duration of international student mobility (1st time) (%)	Long Perfect duration Short	1.8 39.2 58.5	2.6 44.6 52.3
Evaluation of experience abroad overall (7 Satisfactory/Useful - 1 Unsatisfactory/Useless)	Overall satisfaction Impact on mobility Utility in finding a job Utility in acquiring learning skills	6.5 5.7 5.0 5.2	6.5 5.8 5.4 5.3
Study abroad period led to a longer stay in the host country (%)	YES	22.8	23.2
<b>CURRENT SITUATION: MOBILITY PATTERNS</b>			
Proportion of respondents currently living abroad (%)	YES	22.1	29.4
Ranking of reasons for living abroad	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	International experience Language skills Partner/family	Career opportunities International experience Language skills
Ranking of reasons for staying in home country	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Partner/family Continue studies at home Friends	Partner/family Continue studies at home Friends
Years lived abroad (%)	<1 1 2 3 >3	32.2 23.2 19.8 9.0 15.1	33.4 23.2 17.3 9.2 16.6
Likelihood of going to live abroad during the following year (%)	Very high Rather high Moderate Rather Low Impossible	24.1 9.2 22.9 32.8 10.9	28.8 6.7 19.5 34.7 10.3

Positive impact of Erasmus exchange on opinion about Europe (%)	YES	90.1	91.1
Frequency of visits to the host country after the student mobility (%)	Never 1-3 times 4-6 times 7-9 times 10-12 times	32.5 39.2 12.8 2.8 2.6	34.7 38.3 10.7 1.9 3.2
Maintaining contact with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES	87.2	82.1
Ranking of ways of keeping in touch with former Erasmus friends	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts	Social networking website E-mails Face-to-face contacts
Ranking of more used online social networks by purpose	Education Local friends International friends Job search Professional network	Facebook Facebook Facebook GoldenLine.pl LinkedIn	Facebook Facebook Facebook LinkedIn LinkedIn
Creating a group in a social networking website to keep in touch with former Erasmus student friends (%)	YES	20.2	21.6
<b>CURRENT SITUATION: EMPLOYABILITY PATTERNS</b>			
Ranking of current job position of former international student mobility participants	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	White-collar (skilled labour) Managerial Self-employed	White-collar (skilled labour) Managerial Self-employed
Have ever worked (%)	YES	98.5	98.3
Have worked abroad (%)	YES	69.5	67.0
Type of contract (%)	Unlimited Fixed-term	45.5 25.1	47.4 28.8

Table 8.24. (cd.)

1	2	3	4
Scope of operations of your work organization (%)	International National Regional Local	52.9 17.0 9.0 11.6	54.2 17.3 10.7 10.6
Type of education most appropriate for your work (%)	Doctoral Master Bachelor Lower than higher education	6.8 65.0 14.9 6.4	12.6 68.8 9.0 4.2
Subject of study appropriate for your work (%)	Exclusively my own subject My own subject or related A completely different subject No particular subject	13.1 51.6 14.5 14.3	27.5 57.0 5.9 4.7
Frequency of changing the job (%)	0 1 2 3 >3	27.3 25.4 17.9 11.9 14.5	35.5 29.4 17.3 7.6 7.7
Ranking of determinants of one's career or job position	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Foreign language Higher education International experience	Higher education Foreign language International experience
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA			
Sex	Male Female	20.6 79.4	48.3 51.7
Maximum educational qualification (%)	Bachelor Master Doctoral	5.4 88.7 1.8	2.6 86.0 2.4

Ranking of subjects of studies	1 <sup>st</sup>		Humanities and Arts		Science, mathematics, computing	
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Social studies Management	Engineering, construction Health, social care	Master	Master
Maximum educational qualification of the participant's parents (most often)	Mother	Father	Master	Master	Master	Master
Participant's family members/ friends who are currently living abroad (%)	YES		86.6		81.7	

Note: the table does not include study subjects who described their field of education as 'other'.  
Source: own research.

Table 8.25. The relation between student mobility host country and the current country of residence among Polish participants of the MERGE study

	Student mobility host countries																			
	Germany		Spain		France		Denmark		UK		Portugal		Finland		Belgium		Italy		Sweden	
	n	f	n	f	n	f	n	f	n	f	n	f	n	f	n	f	n	f	n	f
1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Germany	51	0.195	3	0.017	3	0.017	9	0.060	2	0.019	1	0.009	1	0.010	3	0.032	0	0	3	0.037
Spain	2	0.008	17	0.094	3	0.017	1	0.007	0	0	0	0	2	0.020	0	0	1	0.011	0	0
France	1	0.004	3	0.017	22	0.128	0	0	1	0.009	0	0	1	0.010	1	0.011	0	0	0	0
Denmark	2	0.008	0	0	0	0	15	0.100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.025
UK	7	0.027	3	0.017	3	0.017	4	0.027	19	0.176	5	0.046	6	0.060	1	0.011	2	0.021	2	0.025
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.037	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.012
Finland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.050	0	0	0	0	0	0



Table 8.25. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Belgium	2	0.008	0	0	7	0.041	0	0	1	0.009	1	0.009	0	0	14	0.147	1	0.011	2	0.025
	Italy	1	0.004	0	0	0	0	1	0.007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0.126	0	0
	Sweden	1	0.004	0	0	0	0	1	0.007	0	0	1	0.009	2	0.020	0	0	0	0	4	0.049
Current countries of residence	Poland	180	0.690	147	0.812	124	0.721	110	0.733	80	0.741	87	0.806	77	0.770	72	0.758	74	0.779	60	0.741
	Other	14	0.054	8	0.044	10	0.058	9	0.060	5	0.046	9	0.083	6	0.060	4	0.042	5	0.053	7	0.086
	Total	261	1	181	1	172	1	150	1	108	1	108	1	100	1	95	1	95	1	81	1
	F	0.310	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.279	0.279	0.267	0.267	0.259	0.259	0.194	0.194	0.230	0.230	0.242	0.242	0.221	0.221	0.259	0.259
	P	0.630	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.458	0.458	0.375	0.375	0.679	0.679	0.190	0.190	0.217	0.217	0.609	0.609	0.571	0.571	0.190	0.190

Note: n – number of students; f – fraction of students in host countries; F – the share of study subjects now living abroad in all study subjects who had student mobility in country X (as a fraction); P – the share of study subjects who had student mobility in country X and now live in the same country in all study subjects who had student mobility in country X and now live abroad (as a fraction).

Source: own research.

We carried out a series of additional analyses in order to enrich our understanding of principal MERGE quantitative results in Poland.

Our first comparison concerns male and female participants of international student mobility (Tab. 8.21). The response patterns were predominantly similar for both sexes, but we observed some differences as well. Women took part in double student mobility more often than men. While the main destination country was Germany for both sexes, men selected Denmark and the UK as the second and third most popular student mobility host countries, whereas women preferred Spain and France. As far as languages used during studies abroad, English and German occupied the top positions among both sexes, but the third one was different: French for female students and Spanish for males. We observed no differences in the ranking of 3 major international student mobility motivations. Women considered their international student mobility less relevant in finding a job than men, but it was female students who extended their stay abroad after the study period more often as well as more of them tend to live abroad at the time of our enquiry. Their main reason for living abroad is to gain international experience, while men emphasise the role of career opportunities. The Erasmus exchange had a more positive impact on the opinion about Europe among females, though this indicator was very high among males as well. More women than men visited their student mobility host country afterwards and maintained contact with former Erasmus friends. The use of social media was similar with the exception of job search, which was performed most often in LinkedIn by males and in GoldenLine.pl by females. Women reported more often creating a group on a social networking website to keep in touch with their former Erasmus friends. The second most prevalent job situation of males is holding a managerial position while it is being inactive on the labour market for females. The same very high proportion of men and women (68.6%) said they had worked abroad. Men had permanent jobs more often than women, whereas it was the other way round for fixed-term contracts. Women assessed more often than men that no particular subject of study was appropriate for their work or it was a completely different subject than they had completed at the university. Female participants had educational background mostly in humanities and arts, social studies, and management, while men specialised in science, mathematics, computing, engineering and manufacturing.

Our second analysis concerned the differences linked to the educational background of one's parents (Tab. 8.22), which is a proxy for the socio-economic status. 937 study participants had both parents with higher education and 813 had both parents without higher education. Naturally, there was also a group of alumni who had one parent with tertiary education, but we excluded them from this analysis for the sake of clarity. Among those with highly educated parents, double international student mobility was more prevalent. Moreover, they participated in mobility more often at Master and doctoral levels. Self-reported effects of mobility differed as well. Students with educated parents emphasized acquiring host

country language skills, while the other group underlined making international friends. Study abroad period led to a longer stay in the host country more often among students with more educated parents, but the proportion of study subjects currently living abroad turned out to be very similar in both groups. However, alumni with less educated parents reported shorter stays abroad more often as well as a lower frequency of visits to the host country after the student mobility. Regarding job search, subjects with less educated parents rely on GoldenLine.pl while their colleagues use LinkedIn. Interestingly, a higher proportion of alumni with less educated parents reported creating a group in a social networking website to keep in touch with their former Erasmus friends. Participants with better educated parents considered higher education types as most appropriate for their work as well as that exclusively their own study subject was appropriate for their current job. Our respondents with more educated parents tended to finish their own education at a relatively higher level, but there was no difference in the principal fields of studies.

Our third comparison concerns the impact of emigration on selected variables (Tab. 8.23). 1780 of our study subjects stayed in Poland, while 589 were living abroad. The group of emigrants was characterised by a higher frequency of study periods abroad. The emigrants took part in international student mobility at the doctoral level over 3 times more often than non-migrants. The emigrants emphasised making international friends as the principal effect of their student mobility, whereas the non-migrants underlined learning host language. Interestingly, the non-migrants considered their international mobility as too short more often than the emigrants. The emigrants showed higher satisfaction levels regarding their international student mobility, especially regarding its impact on subsequent mobility and utility in finding a job. Understandably, the study abroad period led to a longer stay in the host country significantly more often among the emigrants. Currently living abroad had a clear implication for the duration of the cumulated period of living abroad. The emigrants tend to use LinkedIn for job search and professional networking, whereas the non-migrants rather rely on the Polish social networking website called GoldenLine.pl. Naturally, 93% of the emigrants have worked abroad compared to 61% of non-migrants. The emigrants have less permanent jobs and more fixed-term contracts. They work more often in organisations having an international scope of operations. They also tend to change jobs more frequently. They believe that the critical determinant of their career is foreign language proficiency rather than higher education. The emigrants studied science, maths and computing more often, while the non-migrants usually graduated from humanities and arts.

The last cross-sectional analysis was based on different types of education (Tab. 8.24). We split the sample into those with more humanistic and social educational background (encompassing such field of study as: humanities and arts, social studies, education, management, law and administration) and those

with a more scientific and technical background (including: science, maths, computer science, engineering, construction, health, social care, agriculture, veterinary studies and services). For simplicity reasons, we will call them respectively ‘socials’ and ‘technicals’. The socials took part in international student mobility at the bachelor level relatively more often than the technicals, who in turn were more mobile at the doctoral level. The most popular destination country was Germany for the socials, and Denmark for the technicals. The international student mobility was evaluated as too short especially by the socials. It had a higher utility in finding a job for the technicals. Relatively more technicals have emigrated. The main reason for living abroad is the pursuit of career opportunities among the technicals and gaining international experience among the socials. The socials tend to maintain contact with their former Erasmus student friends more often. They perform job search in GoldenLine.pl rather than LinkedIn. The technicals have jobs that require a higher education level. The technicals consider more often that exclusively their own subject of study is appropriate for their work. They change jobs less frequently. They believe that higher education is the principal determinant of their career or job position compared to foreign language competence among the socials. Women prevail largely in the category of socials, whereas the sex distribution of the technicals is balanced.

We have also analysed the relation between student mobility host country and the current country of residence among Polish participants of the MERGE study on the basis of 10 most important student mobility host countries (Tab. 8.25). The share of study subjects now living abroad in all study subjects who had student mobility in country X ranged from 0.188 for Spain to 0.310 for Germany. the share of study subjects who had student mobility in country X and now live in the same country in all study subjects who had student mobility in country X and now live abroad varied considerably. It was only 0.190 for Portugal and Sweden and as much as 0.679 for the UK, followed by Germany (0.630) and Belgium (0.609).

#### 8.4. CONCLUSION AND SELECTED INSIGHTS FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

On the basis of our large-scale survey among former Polish Erasmus students (2369 completed questionnaires), we assessed the impact of student mobility on subsequent mobility and employability. As we focused on those who had their Erasmus mobility in 2007 or 2008, we could take advantage of the benefit of hindsight, which was a very innovative research approach in this area. Not surprisingly, almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the study subjects had their courses in English (at least some of them) during their international student mobility. The second most popular language of studies was German, followed by French, Spanish, and Italian.

The principal motivations to study abroad included: to gain new experiences, to acquire practical foreign language skills, and to get to know a new culture. Other important motivations included: tourism, becoming more independent, making international friends, and having better career prospects. The principal self-reported effects of international student mobility were associated with an improvement in host country language skills and making international friends. More than 2/3 of our respondents indicated the highest possible level of general satisfaction with their international student mobility. More than 90% of the study subjects had no doubts they would recommend such an experience to their friends. As much as 1/4 of the study subjects reported they were living abroad at the time of the survey. The principal reasons for living abroad included international experience and career opportunities. The principal reasons for the decision not to live abroad were related to one's partner or family and the continuation of studies in Poland. 90.5% of our respondents confirmed that their Erasmus exchange had had a positive impact on their opinion about Europe. 85.4% of our respondents reported they kept in touch with their former Erasmus student friends. The principal way of keeping in touch is with the use of social media, followed by e-mails. A vast majority of our study subjects (almost 2/3) had a white-collar job, with additional 8% holding managerial positions. Less than 5% reported unemployment, which is a very good result taking into account the situation of their age cohorts on the Polish labour market. As much as 68.6% reported they had ever worked abroad. The majority of former international student mobility participants were engaged in organisations with an international remit of activities. We wanted our respondents to estimate the importance of selected factors for their career development and job position. Higher education and proficiency in foreign languages were judged very important by the majority of our study subjects. 1/3 of former international student mobility participants considered international experience to have a very important influence on their professional development and position.

We also conducted the survey among 81 Polish graduates who did not take part in international student mobility. They attached the highest importance to the following reasons for the decision not to study abroad: insufficient financial support, fear of separation from one's partner or family, lack of motivation, insufficient information about mobility opportunities, fear of losing one's job, and an obligation to take care of one's child or parent.

Apart from the review of literature, extant statistical data and quantitative data analysis on the basis of a standardised questionnaire across the MERGE country case studies, we have also collected a considerable amount of qualitative evidence as a result of interviews with former Erasmus students and current experts in this field.

Regarding Poland, we have conducted 8 interviews with former Polish Erasmus students representing various fields of studies, professional careers, and Erasmus host countries. We have also conducted 6 interviews with University of Lodz

Erasmus coordinators at the faculty or department level. We consider them to be experts in the domain under study as they are responsible for the Erasmus programme everyday management and have frequent contacts with students engaged in international mobility. All of them were conducted in Polish according to the framework suggested by the MERGE international coordinator. We have collected a wide range of testimonials and opinions regarding one's participation in the Erasmus programme with an emphasis on its impact on subsequent employability and international mobility. We have delved into the issues from two perspectives – of former participants of international student mobility and Erasmus coordinators having considerable expertise in the field. The interviewed alumni have the benefit of hindsight, as we focussed on those who had their international student mobility a sufficiently long time ago to be able to evaluate its long-term effects on their life and professional career.

Very positive opinions largely prevail in answers from both categories of our interviewees. Social networking and personal development outcomes of international student mobility are underlined, but also our interlocutors notice a considerable number of professional benefits. The boost in host language (or English) competence, communication skills as well as in intercultural understanding and cooperation potential were mentioned in most interviews. The students indicated obtaining a higher level of self-confidence, independence, self-reliability, open-mindedness and tolerance. They think they have become more entrepreneurial in the broad sense of this word – not only setting up new businesses, but also adopting a more proactive stance in one's career and life. Keeping in touch with former Erasmus friends is widespread and persistent for a long time after the mobility. Some interviewees mentioned educational benefits resulting from the involvement in a different education system, pedagogy and learning style at the host university. They particularly appreciated team work and group projects. Our interviewees believe they are more open to international cooperation, mobility and professional career options thanks to Erasmus. The mobility does not have to transform into emigration, but still it may have a considerable impact on one's career and life. At the very least, it is a nice point in one's CV appreciated by most employers. However, the improvement in one's soft skills, including language proficiency, is widely recognised as a common characteristic of former Erasmus students. Some employers are aware that those students tend to engage in international mobility who pay more attention to their subsequent value and utility on the labour market, so the mere fact of having taken part in Erasmus is evaluated positively among potential employers apart from all other benefits resulting from it. In some cases, the student mobility facilitated the acquisition of professional qualifications or titles, such as becoming a translator. One person deals with Poland as an expert working abroad. Sometimes, the mobility for studies facilitated the decision to take up a traineeship, a job or further studies abroad, thus its impact on subsequent mobility is corroborated in our interviews. It does

not have to translate into a return to the host country (which is often impossible due to an economic crisis and a difficult situation on the labour market of the host country), but rather into having a higher level of acceptance of engaging in any other types of international mobility anywhere. In some instances, subsequent international mobility is blocked by family considerations, but in other examples, it is just the opposite – meeting a partner during the student mobility may lead to emigration and facilitate the decision to look for a job abroad.

There were few complaints concerning Erasmus mobility. Some graduates indicated dissatisfaction with the level of financial scholarship granted for the mobility. Others pointed out problems with the selection of courses abroad and their subsequent need to make up the differentials in the study programmes after the return to the home university. Two alumni observed they could not take full advantage of their mobility because of a long-term strike at the host university. One interviewee did not like the pressure from other Erasmus students to engage in too many parties and pub crawls. The difficulty of disentangling long-term Erasmus effects from previous international mobility was also raised.

The experts emphasised the academic aspects of international student mobility. Some of them expressed concern about the system of credit transfer and problems in matching the programme of studies abroad with the host university curriculum. Nevertheless, they indicated a wide range of favourable outcomes of Erasmus student mobility. Apart from the academic benefits, which may be less evident, the student gains logistical and organisational skills. Erasmus contributes to international networks of connections, mainly through online social networks like Facebook. They are of the social type, but have the potential to transform into professional networks. The coordinators see the impact of Erasmus on subsequent mobility (sometimes even outside Europe) and employability. Even if they do not take up a full-time permanent job abroad, this kind of employees are still more inclined to take part in foreign assignments, including as expatriates. The experience gained abroad is taken into consideration by potential employers, especially in the big corporations, where competition for particular positions is particularly strong.

## Chapter 9

### THE ROLE OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME IN THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LODZ

#### 9.1. INTRODUCTION

Whenever we analyse the role of the Erasmus programme in students' education and in offering them better perspective of finding a job, we should do that taking account of the specificity of a given university, the development model it pursues and the circumstances on the domestic and international labour market.

According to estimates, during 25 years of the existence of the Erasmus Programme almost 3 million students in Europe benefited from it, including approximately 108,000 students from Poland and 26,000 academics from 315 domestic higher education institutions. The following were the destinations the most often selected by Poles: Germany (over 23,000), Spain (over 12,000), France (over 11,000). On the other hand, Poland received more than 29,000 Europeans within the framework of Erasmus (*Unijny...*, 2012).

In 2012, Polish students were among the main beneficiaries of the Erasmus programme. Spaniards were in the lead (39,500) followed by the Germans and French (over 33,000), Italians and Poles (15,300) (*Program...*, 2013). In the academic year 2010/2011, most students who came to Polish universities originated from Spain and Turkey (more than 1,300 and 1,100 respectively) (*Gospodarczo-społeczne...*, 2012: 13). The data show some clear tendencies in the interest in the Polish market of education among young Spaniards and Turks.

The specificity of the engagement in the Erasmus Programme in Polish circumstances is shaped by very fast internationalisation of both the universities and the economy. The processes complement each other. Liberalisation of the Polish economy after 1990 created huge demand for professionals very familiar with international environments and prepared to collaborate with foreign



investors. Various international education programmes, including Erasmus, were major sources of such professional staff. As a result of the above, after 1990 the number of foreign enterprises operating in Poland increased at an exponential rate. That was due to foreign direct investment and export orientation of Polish companies, which exported mainly to the European Union member states. The cumulated value of foreign direct investment in Poland in the period 1994–2011 amounted to EUR 153 billion (*Inwestycje...*, 2012). The EU continues to be the recipient of approximately 80% of Polish exports, which means businesses need people who know the EU market and are able to service it (*Gospodarczo-społeczne...*, 2012). Thus, there is a kind of specific synergy between educational programmes and economic cooperation with the EU countries.

It is estimated that foreign capital invested in Poland by the major investors who employ more than 250 people in their companies comes from 54 different countries. That provides evidence for both intense competition on the Polish market, absent in other EU countries, and the scale of interest in the market on the part of foreign investors. According to the Statistical Yearbook of Poland of 2011, there were almost 25,000 businesses with foreign capital in Poland. Most of them were small and medium sized enterprises with less than 50 employees. Simultaneously, we should stress that the 1,220 biggest foreign companies with the employment exceeding 250 people each invested in total over 52% of all of the foreign capital. They also employed almost 72% of all the people employed in companies with foreign capital. In total, in 2011, all foreign companies operating in Poland employed almost 1.6 million people (*Inwestycje...*, 2012).

Some students treat the Erasmus programme as an opportunity to get acquainted with a foreign labour market, which, for some of them, may become the target market for their future employment. That is another factor which needs to be highlighted in the context of the internationalisation of Polish economy and the openness of the EU labour market. At this point, it is worth stressing that the mobility rate for Poland, calculated as the ratio of working age population living in another EU member state to the whole population, is among the highest. In 2010, the highest mobility rate among the new member states was recorded for Romania (11%) followed by Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria (5%). The mobility rate for Poland is slightly lower (4.4%) but remarkable considering its population. As a rule, large member states have low mobility rates (European Commission 2011a).

According to the census of 2011, 1,940,000 people whose country of residence is Poland stayed abroad for more than three months (5% of the population) while at least 2/3 of emigrants stayed abroad for 12 months and more. Earlier estimates by the Central Statistical Office suggest that 80% of migrants stayed in the countries of the EU–27 (*Gospodarczo-społeczne...*, 2012). The data are indicative of the size of emigration and its prevailing orientation focused on the EU countries.

Our observations clearly indicate that students' mobility under the Erasmus Programme also leads to discovering a new cultural environment and building

new personal links with the market in question. These links often make a part of individual career paths connected with personal choices and employment perspectives offered by new markets.

We have conducted an in-depth analysis of students' education at the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the University of Lodz, which, as a new academic unit with strong international orientation, is an excellent example of the unique approach to the development of such strategy.

## 9.2. INTERNATIONAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY MODEL OF STUDENTS' EDUCATION

The model of students' education at the Faculty of International and Political Studies (FIPS) at the University of Lodz was from the very beginning conceived as clearly internationally oriented. Its implementation was much easier than it would be at traditional, classic and mono-disciplinary university departments. The faculty started from scratch as a completely new unit developed based on an innovative and independent idea of its founders. It started as an interdepartmental Institute of International Studies to evolve into the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the University of Lodz in 2000.

The setting up and further development of the FIPS provides evidence that it is much easier to give clear international orientation to educational organisation when we are dealing with a new structure. The identity of new entities can be built on a set of clear-cut values relating to internationalisation. It also helps to strongly stress the benefits connected with the attractiveness of the model of international education.

These attractive values were linked to the fact that students studied *international relations* while lecturers were organised in departments dealing with different geographical parts of the world. International relations were considered both at the interdisciplinary level and in functional terms (e.g. international business in a global context). An in-depth analysis of international environment combined with high mobility of researchers and students provided solid foundations for the international model of education.

It seems that it is much easier to give international orientation to a university when we are dealing with interdisciplinary rather than mono-disciplinary teams. Mono-disciplinary teams by their nature prefer a more conservative approach and are considered safer. They are also less open to any innovation. In the case of interdisciplinary teams, the openness to external contacts is usually much bigger and they are more willing to enter into academic agreements with new foreign partners. Hence, in Poland, the most internationally oriented have been new university structures with interdisciplinary approaches, as they were established to deliver new educational programmes and projects calling for more international cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral.

### 9.3. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AS A RELEVANT SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The inclusion of the Polish model of university education into Erasmus represents a totally different dimension and cultural context than in the “old” EU member states. For Poland, the Erasmus programme, besides its objective merits, has also symbolic meaning and prestige. To a Polish student, the participation in the Erasmus programme has always offered an opportunity to get actively involved in European educational structures which were unattainable to her/his parents. Thus in the Polish context, Erasmus was a symbol of a specific generational shift with some flavour of *freedom*. Its philosophy and practice gave the students complete freedom of access to educational structures in most European countries. They offered them the possibility to familiarise with those structures together with cultural differences which accompanied them.

For Polish students, studying abroad within the framework of the Erasmus programme, is still a prestigious achievement. In the past, it was feasible mainly for students from big cities while at present more and more young people from smaller towns participate, which confirms the democratisation of the internationalisation of university education. It is estimated that in Poland, in 2011, as many as 315 universities, public and non-public, had a valid Erasmus Charter. Studying abroad under the Erasmus Programme is prestigious in Poland also because it is available only to the best students with the highest marks who apply through a competitive admission process. A large inflow of foreign students to Poland, for whom the participation in an international students’ mobility scheme is one of the major arguments for selecting a particular subject of studies, is a new phenomenon which increases the interest in the Erasmus programme.

In the Polish context, universities or their individual departments may consider a developed students’ mobility scheme such as Erasmus as a *specific source of competitive advantage* in terms of marketing. That is the strategy followed also by the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the University of Lodz. Building up an extensive network of partner relations with foreign universities required and still requires a strong engagement of the representatives of the University and an attractive educational offer for Polish and foreign students.

The attractiveness of educational courses available in English is the precondition for establishing collaboration with universities abroad. The Faculty of International and Political Studies offers its full curriculum in English at undergraduate and graduate levels for the programme in *international relations* (specialisation pathway *International Marketing*) (see Annex 1). That helps both prepare Polish students for studies abroad and receive in Lodz a big group of foreign students within the framework of the Erasmus programme.

On the other hand, an international educational curriculum, supported with a vast network of partnership agreements with European universities, works as an incentive for Polish students when they choose their studies. When choosing between universities or courses within the same university, students take account of the possibility to study abroad. With similar university curricula, an attractive international mobility scheme becomes a valid argument. The attractiveness is rated with both the scale of exchange (number of places available) and the diversity of potential foreign partners (population of foreign universities and their profiles). Obviously, the argument is meaningful when it is an element of a distinct development strategy of a given university unit (faculty or university).

At this point, we should stress that Poland joined Erasmus in 1998/1999, i.e. at the beginning stage of the development of the Faculty of International and Political Studies. Hence, in Poland, the programme evolved in parallel with the development of a new educational structure and it could become perfectly coordinated with it. The FIPS has been very consistent in making its specialist courses international by expanding both the offer of specialist courses read in foreign languages and the network of Erasmus partnership agreements concluded with partners offering the highest standards of education (see Annex 3). The majority of young researchers at the Faculty of International and Political Studies are its graduates, well prepared to read classes in foreign languages. In the academic year 2013/2014 educational offer of the Faculty includes in total *130 lectures and seminars in foreign languages*, mainly in English, but also in: German, Spanish, French and Russian (see Annex 2).

Properly selected population of partners for agreements based on an in-depth analysis of the specificity of foreign universities and lecturers' personal contacts is also an important element of the policy. Such an approach gives strategic dimension to the collaboration in question and meets mutual interests of the parties. Most of Erasmus agreements are active and guarantee mutual exchange of students.

Table 9.1. Students received by the FIPS under Erasmus

Year	Spain	Germany	Turkey	Slovakia	Italy	France	Other	Total
2007/2008	6	4	2	0	0	0	4	16
2008/2009	3	4	3	0	1	0	2	13
2009/2010	6	0	5	2	0	1	1	15
2010/2011	5	4	9	3	3	0	9	33
2011/2012	5	2	17	2	1	0	9	36
2012/2013	14	7	18	0	0	3	4	46

Source: own research of internal information of the University of Lodz.

Data in table 9.1 confirm clear domination of students from Spain and Germany with some shift towards Turkey in recent years. The number of students from Germany is also growing. Practical application of the model calls for a lot of openness and engagement of the leaders of the Faculty in seeking new partners and stimulating the exchange (subsidising students' travel costs).

#### 9.4. ADVISORY SERVICES HELPING STUDENTS CHOOSE A COURSE

The success of Erasmus exchange assumes setting up of a system of active advisory services to students. They should be advised about the choice of a foreign university and the selection of courses they would like to take when studying abroad. The process should not be approached in a standard way but it should be deeply individualised, i.e. tailored as much as possible to the career path of a particular student.

In Poland, the selection of courses to be pursued abroad must be approved by the head of a given specialisation before the exchange takes place. In practical terms, it means starting consultations with the person who takes care of the selected educational path. Emphasis is put on making advisory services specific in relation to the subject of the diploma thesis. That is particularly true of the students of graduate courses for whom Erasmus mobility scheme should perfectly match the writing of the Master degree thesis. Ideally, the destination of the mobility should fit the subject of the thesis. It often happens in the case of the FISP that the subjects of Master theses usually have an international dimension, which means that in order to write them, one needs to apply the method of international comparative studies. Studying abroad enables to collect such data. For example, a student who writes her Master's thesis on Lufthansa strategy intends to study at the partner university in Mainz, the head office location of the company. In an ideal situation, writing of the thesis and Erasmus exchange could be combined with an internship at the company which she analyses and which, potentially, may become her future employer. Another excellent example is Erasmus exchange with the Spanish University in Granada, combined with an internship in the regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Andalucía. The Master's thesis concerned the methods of simulating international collaboration between Spanish and Polish companies and it was successfully defended but there was also a trade mission from the region of Andalucía to Poland. These examples are especially relevant when discussing the complementarities of various components of the Erasmus programme.

We are dealing with a specific international triad combining studying abroad with an international subject of the Master's thesis and an employment or an internship in a foreign company (Fig. 9.1).

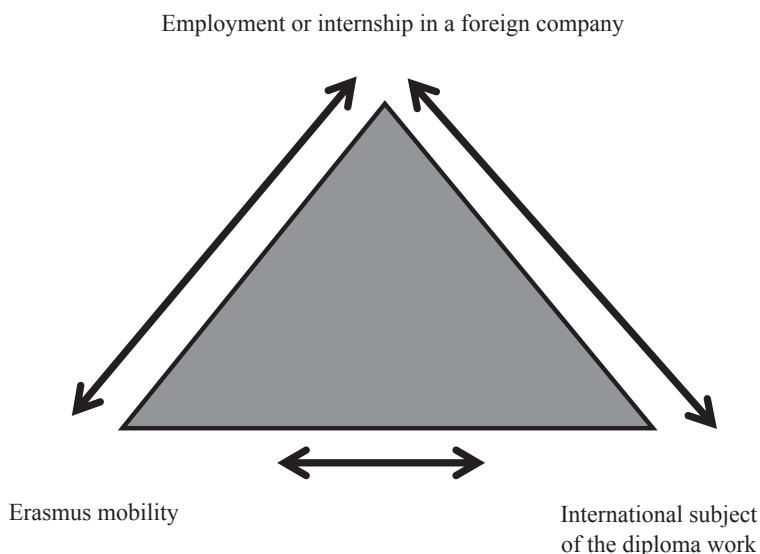


Figure 9.1. The Triad model in international Erasmus education

Source: own research

Studying abroad gives the participant of the Erasmus programme an opportunity to collect detailed literature from a given language area and the possibility to consult some aspects of the thesis with foreign professors. For theses relating to foreign companies, internships in these companies could be available as well as, in the best case scenario, unique empirical research. The FIPS also plans to develop the model for foreign students coming to Poland to study within the Erasmus programme. The factor may become an important argument when selecting Erasmus mobility destination. Students will appreciate more and more the possibility of an internship in an international company or in an internationally oriented Polish company.

It seems that *a personalised approach to a student* regarding education curriculum also abroad will become one of the crucial components of counselling and building the quality of education at universities. Erasmus students' mobility scheme should be an important link in the process and, by the same token, a relevant source of competitive advantage.

#### 9.5. PARTNER COLLABORATION WITH SELECTED UNIVERSITIES ABROAD

An efficient Erasmus students' mobility scheme needs a strategic network of partner collaboration with selected universities abroad. Strategic nature of the links means careful selection of partners interested not only in formal

conclusion of specific agreements but, most of all, their further development and enrichment with quality elements. The latter is usually feasible when there is a long previous experience of international cooperation or when partners are open to innovation.

Such an approach to international collaboration assumes much deeper engagement of the teaching staff and the authorities of a particular department in its development than in traditional systems. Collaboration may not be limited to university Erasmus offices or representatives. It must be a part of a wider system of advisory services for foreign students coming to a particular university. Hence, the selection of partners is crucial together with the building of a wider network of partner links.

We should shift from typically formal approaches to building more direct forms of cooperation and information exchange. The programme of such mobility focused on the quality of education is a key challenge for the future. It assumes greater concentration of the exchange on several strategic partners and building the scope of cooperation together with them. In such an approach foreign students are no longer anonymous and can expect a more *individualised advice*, maintaining the autonomy and independence of their individual choices.

At the FISP, exchanges within the framework of the Erasmus Programme are fully decentralised. The Faculty is their main driving force. In practice, it means the faculty is independently seeking potential partners for the exchange abroad. Key role is played by the leaders of the Faculty and people who collaborate with selected universities. New agreements are mostly based on personal contacts. These contacts are developed within international university consortia and direct research contacts. Personal relations offer an excellent opportunity to present our own educational offer, in particular courses read in English.

Table 9.2. FIPS lecturers' participation in Erasmus mobility scheme

Academic year	Mobility visits
2007/2008	21
2008/2009	24
2009/2010	29
2010/2011	30
2011/2012	28
2012/2013	30
2013/2014	37

Source: internal data.

The large number of mobility visits for the academic staff sponsored by the Faculty provides the foundations for a new network of partner contacts abroad (Tab. 9.2). In the case of the FIPS, more than 50% of the staff participate in the mobility scheme. They make a big group of potential ambassadors of the Faculty and promoters of the Erasmus mobility scheme.

The Dean and Faculty Plenipotentiary for Mobility Scheme are the key persons for successful development of Erasmus Programme. Dean's responsibility includes providing genuine leadership in international university exchange scheme and establishing new strategic contacts while the Plenipotentiary is expected to quickly draft documents necessary for launching direct cooperation. Foreign partners appreciate the efficiency of the Plenipotentiary reflected in quick and professional submission of the set of documents necessary to sign bilateral agreements.

Cooperation under the Erasmus Programme decentralised down to the level of faculties must be accompanied by decentralisation of financial decisions. The latter are connected with subsidising students and staff mobility visits. A faculty for which Erasmus is of strategic importance should also consider strategic the outlays relating to its development. It calls for the allocation of certain financial resources in the budget of the faculty for subsidising students and staff visits to partner universities. On the other hand, the wish to attract foreign students to a given faculty necessitates concrete appropriations made for the development of innovative teaching methods (for courses delivered in English) and continuous expansion of library resources with the latest publications in English, which will facilitate studying in a foreign language. There is a specific synergy between the two. Development of curricula in English prepares Polish students to study abroad and, at the same time, it helps to increase the population of foreign students coming to Poland. It also calls for more promotion of the faculty brand internationally.

## 9.6. INDIVIDUAL CAREER PATH MODEL

Erasmus offers students excellent opportunities to individualise their career paths. It is also an ideal introduction into students' making independent choices relating to the shaping of their individual educational and professional pathways. In the case of Poland, it is of paramount importance as it also contributes to building up student's maturity and responsibility for decisions he/she has taken. Such an approach assumes the involvement of mentors in individual counselling for students. That is a totally new philosophy of education, which calls for improvements in the quality and forms of advisory services to students in the context of challenges posed by the more and more internationalised labour market.

Decisions on which foreign university to choose within the framework of the Erasmus Programme should be taken upon prior consultancy with the mentors



of individual specialisations and people familiar with the specificity of individual universities. It seems that the model in which students of subsequent years share their experience of studying at a particular foreign university should gain in importance. The FIPS intends to set up a sort of a databank on strengths and weaknesses of its partner universities which will help in making rational choices and in student's adaptation to the requirements of a partner university.

Erasmus may, and should, be understood as a complementary part or often even as an extension of the curriculum available in the home country. This is the understanding favourable for the most dynamic students, open to other cultures and strongly motivated to act independently. Correct choice of a foreign university and of a course available in a foreign language is the precondition for rational individualisation of the educational model. Private contacts of the mentor and her/his earlier direct collaboration with a given foreign university play a very positive role in the process. More in-depth and validated information concerning the specificity of foreign education lets students adjust as much as possible the curriculum they choose to their expectations and future career plans. Direct contacts with research and teaching staff of a foreign university may be particularly relevant for writing a diploma work, receiving necessary advice in the process and substantive mentoring. Thus, not only knowledge should be transferred skillfully but also contacts and recommendations for students. That is of fundamental importance when writing diploma theses.

Looking at the involvement of the FIPS students we should highlight their maturity and independence as well as responsibility for making very reasonable choices and engagement in education abroad. FIPS students often ask their mentors from foreign partner universities for letters of recommendation, which confirm their commitment and may become relevant when applying for a job in the future.

#### 9.7. COMBINING STUDIES WITH LEARNING ABOUT LOCAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The authorities of the Faculty support combining studies with temporary work in the new foreign environment by Polish students who participate in the Erasmus mobility scheme. Combining studies and temporary work is positive as it shows students' entrepreneurial spirit and ability to adapt to the specificity of a foreign environment. Whenever possible, we encourage students to spend a full academic year abroad. That is the time when they can become really familiar with a foreign university and local business circles.

The FIPS students very often extend their stays abroad as they are offered an additional internship or have the opportunity to get professional practice. An internship or practice may be combined with university curriculum or may take place during holidays when the academic year is over.

Ideally, writing the diploma thesis can be harmoniously combined with the internship abroad, a practice followed by the most active and entrepreneurial participants of the Erasmus Programme. As we have already stressed, in a model situation, internships take place in companies or organisations somehow related to the specificity of the diploma thesis. Model examples of such solutions have been quoted above. They involved selected companies, city or regional authorities, foreign representations, media or business environment organisations (chambers of commerce and industry, consulting companies, consulates, etc.). For example, a student who writes her diploma thesis on urban marketing had an internship in an organisation dealing with the promotion of the Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela. In the course of it, she was actively involved in empirical studies on how tourists saw the city. The internship was directly linked with her Erasmus studies at the University in Santiago de Compostela. It helped her collect interesting empirical material that she used in both her diploma work and in the company which offered the internship. Another model example of such approach: a student who writes her diploma thesis about the strategy of creating a brand for cities and regions while being on Erasmus mobility visit in Madrid, Spain. She had an internship with a Spanish marketing company, which specialises in international consulting connected with place branding for countries, cities and regions.

Seeking synergies between the subject of the diploma work, choice of the foreign university and internship must result from an individual student's strategy. It requires prior searches on the Internet and the ability to take advantage of relationship marketing. Harmonious combination of such complementary goals is obviously a model example, which can be used as a paragon for Polish and foreign students. Best examples show that subsequent choices made by the student and its university should make a smooth sequence. Such a combination of Erasmus studies with professional work or an internship helps establish new contacts, useful for the student in planning her/his future professional career. Such solutions may and should be treated as models. They require the student to be very active and inventive, he/she is also expected to establish personal relations with local business partners. That is feasible in most cases for students with very clearly formulated educational and professional goals for whom Erasmus exchange visit is an important stage of a carefully planned career development process. Then we can also see a very clear link between the individual professional project of a student and the place where he/she goes on Erasmus mobility.

A student's educational and professional project is thus linked with both a selected country, often with a very concrete province, region or city where her/his preferred university is based. There is a clear synergy of certain choices which make a part of a well-thought sequence. The feasibility of such a scenario assumes that the selection of students for Erasmus mobility visits should focus on people very clearly predisposed and able to justify their choice of a foreign university with their individual career plan. It is crucial that the process should not become

„depersonalised” and it should offer possibilities to monitor the motivation behind the choice of a particular academic institution in the context of the student’s future professional career development plan. Studying abroad under the Erasmus Programme, if it is to bring concrete results and improve employability, should stimulate making such mature choices.

#### 9.8. INTERNATIONAL MARKETING — MODEL PRINCIPLES OF BENEFITTING FROM ERASMUS PROGRAMME

The Erasmus programme applied in the context of the specialisation in *International Marketing* is of specific relevance. It is an integral element of the unique philosophy of university education. Such an approach to Erasmus assumes its complete integration with the internationalisation model of education for this specialisation pathway. Students of *International Marketing*, much more often than their colleague students from other faculties, benefit from the Erasmus Programme. They can choose from almost 90 mobility visits available annually under 70 partnership agreements with universities in 23 countries. All the best students interested in studying abroad can benefit from the scheme.

A very positive phenomenon has been observed: students of courses similar to our specialisation, such as *management* and *economics* — who study at the Faculty of Economics and Sociology or at the Faculty of Management — often choose *International Marketing* as the second principal programme of their studies. One of the key arguments is deeper internationalisation of the FIPS curriculum. Thanks to the long-lasting, consistent strategy, our Faculty can offer a much more developed and differentiated offer of studies abroad under the Erasmus programme. The offer expands every year as we add on new foreign partners whose profiles correspond with international model of education worked out at our Faculty. The agreements also provide for mobility visits available to all the students from our Faculty. For students who come to the FIPS, especially as graduate students, rich Erasmus offer is an important value added in comparison with what is available at their home faculties. Erasmus international mobility scheme is also understood as an important factor increasing their chances for future employment on the international, competitive labour market.

According to international experts who work in the Polish market, an employer when faced with a choice between two equal candidates representing similar level of education will most probably choose the one with Erasmus experience. Marek Kozłowski from PwC, said that „any employer who can choose between two people with similar achievements and very similar CVs will select the candidate with Erasmus experience. He/she has surely got a more comprehensive worldview. Besides he/she has already shown initiative as to benefit from Erasmus mobility scheme you must invest some effort.” (*Eksperci...*, 2012). Mobility has become a relevant assessment criterion of a potential employee as more and more

often, it is also an important component of the strategy of transnational and global companies. These companies expect their employees to be highly mobile as they enter new markets and need people who could manage the process.

Polish students' participation in the Erasmus programme is a source of innovations in education. That refers mainly to various aspects of foreign university collaboration with business circles. International experience of Polish students, especially after mobility visits to renowned schools of business, provide important incentives for the improving of education and building new relationships with the environment at the FIPS. Innovative teaching methods and team work at the level of special project teams focus the attention. A student who comes back to Poland is expected to identify positive elements in teaching abroad which could and should be implemented by our Faculty the most quickly. From student's viewpoint, such a report or comment is also very useful, since it teaches us how to observe foreign universities and perceive the most inspiring elements (specific *benchmarking*, i.e. comparing ourselves to international counterparts).

On many occasions, Erasmus stimulated innovative processes at Polish universities. It was linked to increasing expectations of foreign students who come to Poland but also to increasing expectations of Polish students who studied abroad under the Erasmus scheme and expect similar standards at home. As far as Polish schools of business are concerned, it means broader presence of business people and economic practitioners as lecturers. Similar suggestions were very important still some years ago, when many universities started to introduce changes in their curricula (*Eksperci...*, 2012).

Making good use of the Erasmus programme is based on a careful selection of foreign partners for such agreements. Close collaboration should take place only with partners representing a similar or complementary academic profile. Genuine synergy and commonality of interests may bring numerous teaching innovations, which improve students' chances to find an interesting job. Apparently, together with consistent expansion of Erasmus student mobility scheme in the future, stress should be placed on quality aspect of the programme. Improvement of the quality of education should be achieved through the expansion of individual counselling for foreign and Polish students (modern type of *coaching*). We should also improve the exchange of information about university curricula at partner universities.

For foreign students who plan to come to Poland, there should be other incentives designed to impact their decision making. An optimum system of incentives should include individual counselling connected with the subject of the diploma thesis, the possibility of an internship in a company and perspectives of future employment. It seems that such a system may intensify mutual exchange. Foreign students who come to Poland achieve better chances of internships in foreign companies and, consistently, of finding a job in the future. That is due to the very high degree of internationalisation of Polish economy and the possibility to work in foreign companies present on the Polish market. These foreign companies offer various business services (*outsourcing*).

Foreign partners to the Erasmus programme know little about it. They are less familiar with the specificity of the Polish educational and labour markets and that is why additional information effort is needed from Polish universities and faculties engaged in the exchange. Foreign students have some objective reservations to choose Poland as the destination of their Erasmus programme mobility visit. Overcoming these reservations, which result from various stereotypes requires a system of positive information about benefits of studying at a Polish university. The reservations concern not only Poland as a country but also Polish university centres. That is particularly true of less known university cities which lack a clear and strongly positive image abroad. Such problems are surely faced by Lodz, a city which is less known to foreign students, in particular in countries more distant from Poland.

Studies show that many foreign students trust only *word-of-mouth marketing*, i.e. the opinion of colleagues who have already been to Poland on a mobility visit. It is very positive that foreign students who have already had their Erasmus visit to Poland declare they would like to come back here to work or to take post-graduate courses. Post-graduate studies improve chances of finding an interesting job where language and cultural competences connected with the home country of the foreign student are an asset. That is true mainly of international outsourcing companies which offer business services to customers from various language and cultural areas (for example to customers from Francophone, Anglo-Saxon, Iberian and Latin American countries). As many of them will continue their businesses in Poland, employment perspectives for foreign and Polish Erasmus students will also clearly improve.

The development in 2011 at the FIPS of an original programme in *International Marketing* delivered in English helps attract foreign students within the Erasmus programme (see Annex 1). The adopted educational philosophy creates excellent conditions for learning in a small students' group for Polish and foreign students. The advantage of the course is its elitist nature and the possibility to study in a multinational group. In the academic year 2013/2014, foreign students, including Erasmus students, represent almost 50% of the total enrolment to the course, which serves well strategic objectives of the Faculty in the area of internationalisation. Another strength of the model is deep diversification of students' population, which enables establishing contacts with many languages and cultures. In the recent period, 2011–2013, the fact that we offer education in English increased interest in the specialist pathway *International Marketing* among students from outside of the EU. That is in particular the case of countries like: Ukraine, Turkey, Russia and countries of Northern Africa: Egypt and Tunisia. The reason is not only the appeal of the course itself but also the possibility to study abroad at another university within the Erasmus programme.

Courses in English and a very extensive network of partnership Erasmus agreements have become a bridge to the universities of the “old” EU to students from outside of the EU. The phenomenon is expected to intensify in the future, especially in countries which aspire to the EU membership, such as Ukraine or Tur-

key. Studies at a Polish university with a developed system of Erasmus students' exchange agreements are even more attractive to students from these countries. The above model of education enriched with Erasmus mobility visits for students gives them definitely better opportunities to find an attractive job in their home country, in Poland and in the country where they studied.

### 9.9. CONCLUSIONS – FUTURE CHALLENGES

It is expected that in the future, the Erasmus programme will face a lot of new challenges. These are connected with increased mobility of students and employers' requirements on the increasingly competitive international labour market. Increasing employers' requirements will encourage universities to expand the scope of direct collaboration under Erasmus agreements. A simple students' exchange should be enriched with a more extensive system of counselling connected with students' future career. The model could be improved by including the best Erasmus students into joint international research projects leading to diploma theses. In a longer term perspective, we could think of a similar offer for the best graduates contemplating writing their Ph.D. theses.

Considering increasing requirements of the labour market, we should promptly think of a more individualised advice to foreign students. Universities which receive a foreign student could implement the original system of *coaching*. Besides already existing positions of Erasmus mobility scheme coordinators, we could think of having educational and vocational counsellors. Their counselling should focus mainly on possibilities of having an internship on a given market. That could provide value added to the Erasmus exchange. The implementation of such counselling requires the university to develop a network of contacts with business circles on local and regional markets. The proposed approach is an extension of traditional students' exchange with new elements, which are important for getting vocational experience. The biggest challenge here is the change of the operating model of a university. We should also seriously consider the possibility to extend students' exchange with counselling connected with internships and future employment in the host country or in companies from a given cultural area. Obviously, such counselling will be feasible only in academic units open to building new relationships with employers and ready to exchange information.

In the case of *International Marketing* and other business oriented specialist courses, a vital element of FIPS strategy is the construction of a database of potential internship opportunities for students. Individualised coaching will also be introduced, which will help correctly analyse the student's expectations and potential. After an in-depth interview with a foreign student, we will be able to offer her/him business contacts that meet her/his priorities. The system is practised mainly for diploma seminars and when subjects of Master theses are decided.

With respect to research and counselling, universities should consider broader linking of Erasmus students' exchange with the exchange of research staff and new scientific and research projects. The exchange should be based on seeking more synergy between various forms of cooperation between foreign universities which should be more complementary. Such a philosophy could lead to closer cooperation with selected universities which would like to implement it as a pilot scheme for a small group of students.

The new scholarship programme Erasmus+, which has been launched in 2014, is to benefit from the experience of Erasmus. „Its budget for 2014–20 is to amount to EUR 14.5 billion, i.e. by approximately 40% more than the current financing of existing mobility programmes in education and training. Erasmus+ combines a number of scholarship and training schemes for university students and youngsters, such as Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Grundtvig, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and the programme of bilateral cooperation with industrialised countries” (*Program...*, 2013). Erasmus is at the heart of the new strategy of the European Commission aimed at fighting youth unemployment through improving competence acquisition. The initiative „Erasmus for All” combines all the existing cooperation schemes for education, training, youth and sport and there is one programme instead of seven. The change is expected to ensure better effectiveness and easier access to scholarships and eliminate overlaps and fragmentation of initiatives. It is planned that by 2020, 5 million people will have benefited from the new programme, twice as many as now (*Erasmus ma...*, 2012).

Within the new financial perspective Erasmus Programme is designed to stimulate relationships between universities and businesses to improve the chances for employment to young people who participate in the programme. “The impact of Erasmus has been tremendous, not only for individual students, but for the European economy as a whole. Through its support for high-quality teaching and a modern higher education system, with closer links between academia and employers, it is helping us to tackle the skills mismatch. It also gives young people the confidence and ability to work in other countries, where the right jobs might be available, and not to be trapped by a geographic mismatch” said President Barroso. Commissioner Vassiliou added: “Erasmus is one of the great success stories of the European Union: it is our best known and most popular programme. Erasmus exchanges enable students to improve their knowledge of foreign languages and to develop skills such as adaptability which improve their job prospects. It also provides opportunities for teachers and other staff to see how higher education works in other countries and to bring the best ideas home. Demand for places strongly exceeds the resources available in many countries – one of the reasons why we plan to expand opportunities for study and training abroad under our proposed new education, training and youth programme, Erasmus for All.” (European Commission 2012a).

## ANNEX 1

Table 9.3. Curriculum for specialization in *International Marketing*. Classes included in the course in *International Marketing* (1 degree) in English, study subject *international relations*, academic year 2013/2014

Plan of studies (semesters)  
 study subject: International relations  
 type of studies: general university course  
 degree: first  
 study mode: full time  
 specialization: International Marketing  
 since: 2013/2014

Year	Semester	Class	CODE	no. of hours			Total	Type of credit	ECTS	Module to which the class belongs **
				lectures	tutorials	classes/ seminars				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	1	Economics		30		15	45	Pass	4	MP
	1	History of International Relations		30			30	Exam	3	MP
	1	Science of State		30			30	Exam	3	MP
	1	Physical Education				30	30	Pass	1	MP
	1	Specialization course 1		30		30	60	Exam	7	MS
	1	Specialization course 2			30		30	Pass	5	MS
	1	Social Psychology			30		30	Pass	5	MS
Total after semester 1:							hours: 255	ECTS credit points:	28	



Table 9.3. (cd.)

I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	2	Economics		30		15	45	Exam	5	MP	
	2	Demography		30			30	Pass	2	MP	
	2	European Integration		30			30	Exam	3	MP	
	2	Foreign Language			60		60	Pass	3	MW	
I	2	Intellectual Property Rights				10	10	Pass	2	MS	
	2	Specialization course 1			30		30	Pass	5	MS	
	2	Specialization course 2			45		45	Pass	7	MS	
	2	Specialization course 3			30		30	Pass	5	MS	
	Total after semester 2:						hours:	280	ECTS credit points:	32	
	3	Political systems		30			30	Pass	2	MP	
	3	Political and economic geography		30			30	Pass	2	MP	
	3	Statistics		30		15	45	Exam	5	MP	
	3	Foreign Language			60		60	Exam	4	MW	
	3	Specialization course 1		15		15	30	Pass	5	MS	
	3	Specialization course 2			45		45	Pass	7	MS	
	3	Specialization course 3			30		30	Pass	5	MS	
	Total after semester 3:						hours:	270	ECTS credit points:	30	
II	4	Polish Foreign Policy		30			30	Pass	2	MP	
	4	International Organizations		30			30	Pass	2	MP	
	4	Fundamentals of Law		30			30	Pass	2	MP	
	4	International Cultural Relations		30			30	Pass	3	MP	
	4	Specialization course 1		30		15	45	Exam	7	MS	
	4	Specialization course 2			30		30	Pass	5	MS	
	4	Specialization course 3			30		30	Pass	5	MS	
	4	B.A. Seminar				30	30	Pass	4	MW	
	Total after semester 4:						hours:	255	ECTS creditpoints:	30	

5	International Economic Relations	30	15	45	Exam	5	MP
5	Economic Policy	30		30	Pass	4	MP
5	International Political Relations	30		30	Pass	2	MP
5	International Public Law	30		30	Pass	2	MP
5	Information Technologies in Management		30	30	Pass	4	MS
5	Translatory		60	60	Pass	4	MW
5	Specialization course 1		45	45	Exam	7	MS
5	B.A. Seminar		30	30	Pass	4	MW
	Total after semester 5:		hours:	300	ECTS credit points:	32	
6	Translatory		30	30	Pass	3	MW
6	Specialization course 1		30	30	Pass	6	MW
6	B.A. Seminar – thesis preparation and exam		30	30	Pass	15	MW
6	Practice***		120	120	Pass	4	MW
	Total after semester 6:		hours:	210	ECTS credit points:	28	
TOTAL THROUGHOUT THE STUDIES:				hours:	1570	ECTS credit points:	180

\* optional

\*\* organized in accordance with the needs of the teaching unit

\*\*\* internships take place in any semester in accordance with the Rules of Internships, ECTS credit points are added to semester 6

MP — basic module

MS — specialization module

MW — elective module

Specialization Module: *International Marketing*

Year	Semester	Classes in the module	Class details						Type of credit	ECTS
			CODE	no. of hours			Total			
				lectures	tutorials	classes/ seminars				
I	1	Principles of Marketing	30		30	60	Exam	7		
	1	Fundamentals of Management		30		30	Pass	5		
	1	Social psychology		30		30	Pass	5		
	2	Fundamentals of Finance		30		30	Pass	5		
	2	Principles of International Marketing		45		45	Pass	7		
	2	Basics of Effective Communication and Presentation		30		30	Pass	5		
II	3	Methodology of Social Research		30		30	Pass	5		
	3	Introduction to International Marketing Communications		45		45	Pass	7		
	3	Public and non-profit marketing		30		30	Pass	5		
	4	Introduction to Project Management	30		15	45	Exam	7		
	4	E-marketing and Social Media		30		30	Pass	5		
	4	Fundamentals of Human Resources Management		30		30	Pass	5		
III	4	B.A. Seminar			30	30	Pass	4		
	5	Entrepreneurship and business planning		45		45	Exam	7		
	5	B.A. Seminar			30	30	Pass	4		
	6	Sales, Export and Business Negotiations		30		30	Pass	6		
	6	B.A. Seminar — thesis preparation and exam			30	30	Pass	15		
			Specialization module:			hours:	570	ECTS credit points:	104	

Elective Modules:

Year	Semester	Optional classes	Class details						ECTS	
			CODE	no. of hours				Total		Type of credit
				lectures	tutorials	classes/ seminars				
I	2	Foreign Language		60			60	Pass	3	
II	3	Foreign Language		60			60	Exam	4	
	5	Translatory		60			60	Pass	4	
III	6	Translatory		30			30	Pass	3	
	6	Practice		120			120	Pass	4	

Table 9.4. Classes for the course in *International Marketing* (II degree) in English, study subject *international relations*, academic year 2013/2014

Plan of studies (semesters)

study subject

type of studies

degree

study mode

specialization

since

International relations

general university course

second

full time

International Marketing (in English)

2013/2014

Year	Semester	Class	CODE	no. of hours				total	Type of credit	ECTS	Module to which the class belongs **
				lectures	tutorials/ seminars	classes					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	1	Methodology of Social Sciences and the Humanities		30			30	Pass	2	MP	
	1	International Security		30		15	45	Exam	5	MP	
	1	Theory of International Relations		30			30	Exam	3	MP	
	1	Globalization and Regionalization		30			30	Exam	3	MP	
	1	International Financial Markets		15			15	Pass	2	MP	
	1	International Protection of Human Rights		30			30	Exam	3	MP	
	1	Physical Education				30	30	Pass	1	MP	
	1	Marketing Management			30		30	Pass	3	MS	
	1	Strategic Management			30		30	Pass	3	MS	
	1	Consumer Behaviour			30		30	Pass	3	MS	
Total after semester 1 ***:							hours:	300	ECTS credit points:	28	

I	2	Economic Law of EU	30		30		30	Exam	3	MP		
	2	International Economic Transactions	15		15		15	Pass	2	MP		
	2	International Environmental Protection	30		30		30	Exam	3	MP		
	2	Development Economics	30		30		30	Exam	3	MP		
	2	Finance Management		30	30		30	Pass	3	MS		
	2	Marketing Research		30	30		30	Pass	3	MS		
	2	Brand Management		30	30		30	Pass	3	MS		
	2	M.A. seminars		30	30		30	Pass	4	MS		
	2	Optional course/ faculty	30		30		30	Pass	2	MW		
	2	Optional course/ faculty	30		30		30	Pass	2	MW		
	2	Optional course/ faculty	30		30		30	Pass	2	MW		
	Total after semester 2:							hours: 345	ECTS credit points: 32			
II	3	International Social Policy	30		30		30	Exam	3	MP		
	3	International Forecasting and Simulation	30		30		30	Exam	3	MP		
	3	International Marketing		30	30		30	Pass	3	MS		
	3	Political Marketing		30	30		30	Pass	3	MS		
	3	International Marketing Communication		30	30		30	Pass	3	MS		
	3	M.A. seminars		30	30		30	Pass	4	MS		
	3	Optional course/faculty	30		30		30	Exam	4	MW		
	Total after semester 3:							hours: 210	ECTS credit points: 23			

Table 9.4. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	4	Public Sector Management			30		30	Pass	3	MS
	4	Place Branding			30		30	Pass	3	MS
	4	E-Marketing			30		30	Pass	3	MS
II	4	Project Management			30		30	Pass	3	MS
	4	M.A. seminars and Completing Master Thesis			45		45	Pass	25	MS
	Total after semester 4:					hours:	165	ECTS credit points:	37	
TOTAL THROUGHOUT THE STUDIES:						hours:	1020	ECTS credit points:	120	

\* organized in accordance with the needs of the teaching unit

\*\* optional

\*\*\* student must take health and safety at work training in semester 1

MP – basic module

MS – specialization module

MW – elective module

#### Elective Module: INTERNATIONAL MARKETING (in English)

Year	Semester	Elective classes	CODE	Class details					ECTS
				no. of hours			Type of credit	ECTS	
				lectures	tutorials	classes/seminars			
I	2*	Human Resource Management		30			30	Pass	2
	2*	Social Media		30			30	Pass	2
	2*	Advertising		30			30	Pass	2
	2*	Optional course in foreign language		30			30	Pass	2

II	3**	Entrepreneurship	30		30	Exam	4
	3**	Effective Communication and Presentation	30		30	Exam	4
	3**	Global Markets	30		30	Exam	4

\* Student selects 4 lectures from the offer of her/his specialization (see above) or from the offer of the Faculty

\*\* Student selects 1 lecture from the offer of her/his specialization (see above) or from the offer of the Faculty

Specialization module: INTERNATIONAL MARKETING (in English)

Year	Semester	Classes in specialization module	CODE	Class details					ECTS
				no. of hours			Type of credit	ECTS	
				lectures	tutorials/ seminars	classes			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	Marketing Management			30		30	Pass	3
	1	Strategic Management			30		30	Pass	3
	1	Consumer Behaviour			30		30	Pass	3
I	2	Finance Management			30		30	Pass	3
	2	Marketing Research			30		30	Pass	3
	2	Brand Management			30		30	Pass	3
	2	M.A. seminars			30		30	Pass	4



Table 9.4. (cd.)  
Specialization module: INTERNATIONAL MARKETING (in English)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
II	3	International Marketing			30		30	Pass	3
	3	Political Marketing			30		30	Pass	3
	3	International Marketing Communication			30		30	Pass	3
	3	M.A. seminars			30		30	Pass	4
	4	Public Sector Management			30		30	Pass	3
	4	Place Branding			30		30	Pass	3
	4	E-Marketing			30		30	Pass	3
	4	Project Management			30		30	Pass	3
	4	M.A. seminars and Completing Master Thesis			45		45	Pass	25
	specialization module: INTERNATIONAL MARKETING							495	ECTS credit points:

## ANNEX 2

Table 9.5. Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz.  
Lists of courses in foreign languages

Winter semester 2013/2014

<p>Academic Writing in English  American Welfare State  Basics of Effective Communication and Presentation  British Society and Culture  Consumer Behaviour  Contemporary Political and Media Satire  <i>DDR, BRD und Deutschland nach 1945</i>  Economics  Effective Communication and Presentation  Feminist Literature and Philosophy  Feminist Methodology: Interdisciplinary Methods in Women's Studies  Feminist Theory: Between Difference and Diversity  Foreign Language <i>Spanish</i>  Fundamentals of Management  Gender &amp; Academic and Creative Writing  Gender Representations in Advertising  Globalisation and Regionalisation  Global Markets  <i>Historia y politica de los movimientos insurgents en America Latina</i>  History-Culture-Politics  History of International Relations  International Financial Markets  International Marketing  International Marketing Communication  International Protection of Human Rights  International Security  International Social Policy  Intersectionality and Audience Analysis in the Feminist Classroom, Part 2  Introduction to International Marketing Communications</p>	<p>Introduction to the USA  Introduction to US History  Literary Studies: Introduction  Marketing Management  Methodology of Social Sciences and Humanities  Minorities in the USA  Multiculturalism: world-wide approaches  National Minorities in Contemporary World  Philosophy  Polish for Foreigners  Political and Economic Geography  Political Cinema  Political Marketing  Political Parties and Elections  Political Systems  Principles of Marketing  Public and non-profit marketing  Religion and the State  Science of State  Social psychology  Statistics  Strategic Management  The Body in the Feminist Theory and Practice  Theory of International Relations  The Promised Land: Immigrants and Minorities in the United States  War and Imperialism: Feminist and Postcolonial Perspectives on Nationalism  Women's Movements World-wide  <i>Инновационные направления современной политологии: концепции, модели, подходы</i>  <i>Политические системы государств Центральной и Восточной Европы</i></p>
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<p>Advertising  Aesthetics and Beauty Canon  American Cinema: Key Concepts  American Culture and Art  American Ideology in Popular Culture  American Memory: Discourses, Narratives, Aesthetics  American Television Series  Brand Management  Choices, Challenges and Chances of Sino-US Relations  <i>DDR: Auf den Spuren einer Diktatur</i>  Demography  <i>Deutschland in der Gegenwart (nach 1945)</i>  Development Economics  Economic Law of EU  Economics  E-Marketing  EU Justice and Home Affairs  European Integration  Finance Management  Fundamentals of Finance  Fundamentals of Law  Gender and Welfare State: International Perspective  Gender Representations in Advertising  Humanities, Anthropology and Social Sciences: Methodology  Human Resource Management  Human Rights and Gender  <i>Identidades de América Latina y Península Ibérica</i>  Intellectual Property Rights  International Cultural Relations  International Economic Transactions  International Environmental Protection  Internet Journalism Workshop  International Marketing</p>	<p>International Marketing Communication  International Media  International Organizations  International Social Policy  Intersectionality and Audience Analysis in the Feminist Classroom, Part 1  Introduction to Gender in Postmodern Visual Culture  <i>Kultur der deutschsprachigen Länder</i><sup>2</sup>  La Frontera and the New Mestiza Consciousness: Race, Ethnicity and Gender at the U.S.-Mexican Border  Legacy of Antiquity in Modern Times  <i>Los acontecimientos actuales en América Latina y Península Ibérica</i>  Marketing Research  Men and Masculinities  Methodology of Social Research  Modern Culture: Theories  Philosophical and Historical Aspects of Holocaust  Photography  Place Branding  Polish Foreign Policy  Political Campaigns in the Media  Project Management  Principles of Finance  Public Sector Management  Pursuing the American Dream: the Depiction of Family and Immigrants in American Film  Religions in the USA  Social Media  Sociology of organization  Special relationship: the USA and the UK  Transatlantic Relations after WWII  US Politics  Women's Experiences in Muslim Societies: Feminist Contexts  Youth Cultures and Subversion</p>
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## ANNEX 3

Table 9.6. Erasmus Programme, Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz.  
Information about places available for students in the academic year 2014/2015

COUNTRY	UNIVERSITY	COURSE CODE	PLACES	COMMENTS
1	2	3	4	5
BELGIUM	Univesiteit Gent	14.1 Political Science	1	English
BELGIUM	Univesiteit Gent	15.1 Journalism	1	English
BELGIUM	Haute Ecole EPHEC, Brssels	04.7 Marketing and management	3	French or English
BULGARIA	Shoumen University, Shoumen	08.3 History	2	English
CROATIA	University of Zagreb	14.1 Political Science	3	English
CROATIA	University of Zagreb	15.1 Journalism	3	English
CZECH REPUBLIC	Tomas Bata University in Zlin	15.1 Journalism	2	English
ESTONIA	Tallinn University, Tallin	14.1 Political Science	2	English
FINLAND	University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio	14.6 International Relations	2	English; only full academic year stays under Campus Europae aegis
FRANCE	Université Aix-Marseille, Aix-en-Provence	14.1 Political Science	2	Only the winter semester; French; Master's program
FRANCE	Université de Nice – Sophia Antipolis, Nice	14.1 Political Science	2	French
FRANCE	Université de Nice – Sophia Antipolis, Nice	04.0 Business Studies, Management	2	French
FRANCE	Université Paris Descartes	04.0 Business Studies, Management	2	French or English; Bachelor's program
SPAIN	Univesidad de Santiago de Compostela	14.1 Political Science	6	Spanish
SPAIN	Univesidad de Santiago de Compostela	15.1 Journalism	2	Spanish

Table 9.6. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5
SPAIN	Universitat de Vic	08.0 Humanities	4	Spanish
SPAIN	Universidad de Granada	14.1 Political Science	4	Spanish
SPAIN	Universidad de Granada	14.9 Other Social Sciences	4	Spanish
SPAIN	Universidad de Oviedo	04.0 Business Studies, Management	2	Spanish
NETHERLANDS	University of Maastricht	14.6 International Relations	2	English
NETHERLANDS	University of Maastricht	08.0 Humanities	1	English
IRELAND	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	08.0 Humanities	3	English
LITHUANIA	Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas	14.1 Political Science	2	English
LITHUANIA	Europos Humanitarinis Universitetas, Vilnius	14.1 Political Science	1	Russian or English
LITHUANIA	Europos Humanitarinis Universitetas, Vilnius	14.6 International Relations	1	Russian or English
LITHUANIA	Europos Humanitarinis Universitetas, Vilnius	15.0 Communication Science	1	Russian or English
LITHUANIA	Europos Humanitarinis Universitetas, Vilnius	14.6 International Relations	2	Russian or English; only full academic year stays under Campus Europae aegis
LITHUANIA	Europos Humanitarinis Universitetas, Vilnius	15.1 Journalism	1	Russian or English; only full academic year stays under Campus Europae aegis
GERMANY	Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg	14.6 International Relations	1	German
GERMANY	Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg	04.0 Business Studies, Management	1	German

Table 9.6. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5
GERMANY	Technische Universität Chemnitz	14.6 International Relations	4	German
GERMANY	Fachhochschule Merseburg	04.0 Business Studies, Management	2	German
GERMANY	Georg-August-Universität Göttingen	14.1 Political Science	1	German
GERMANY	Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen	14.1 Political Science	2	German
GERMANY	University of Bremen	14.6 International Relations	2	German
GERMANY	University of Stuttgart	14.1 Political Science	2	German
GERMANY	Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)	14.1 Political Science	2	German or English
PORTUGAL	University of Aveiro	14.1 Political Science	2	Portuguese or English
ROMANIA	University of Bucharest	14.1 Political Science	2	English
ROMANIA	West University of Timisoara	14.1 Political Science	2	English
ROMANIA	West University of Timisoara	08.0 Humanities	2	English
ROMANIA	Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca	08.0 Humanities	3	English; American Studies
SLOVAKIA	Matej Bel University, Banska Bystrica	14.1 Political Science	3	English
SLOVAKIA	University of Presov	14.1 Political Science	2	English
SWITZERLAND	Universität Bern	14.1 Political Science	1	German
SWITZERLAND	University of Lucerne	08.0 Humanities	1	German
SWITZERLAND	University of Lucerne	14.0 Social and behavioural science	1	German
SWEDEN	Linnéuniversitet, Växjö	14.1 Political Science	4	English

Table 9.6. (cd.)

1	2	3	4	5
TURKEY	Işık University, Istanbul	14.1 Political Science	2	English
TURKEY	Istanbul Commerce University	14.1 Political Science	2	English
TURKEY	Ankara University	14.6 International Relations	2	English
TURKEY	Gazi University, Ankara	14.6 International Relations	3	English
TURKEY	Afyon Kocatepe University	04.0 Business Studies, Management	3	English
TURKEY	Sakarya University	14.6 International Relations	3	English
TURKEY	Recep Tayyip Erdogan University, Rize	04.0 Business studies, Management	3	English
TURKEY	Yalova University	14.6 International Relations	4	English
TURKEY	Çankaya University, Ankara	09.0 Languages and Philology	4	English
TURKEY	Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya	14.1 Political Science	6	English
TURKEY	Izmir University	15.1 Journalism	1	English
UNITED KINGDOM	De Montfort University, Leicester	04.0 Business Studies, Management	5	English
ITALY	University of Pavia	04.0 Business Studies, Management	2	English
ITALY	University of Macerata	15.1 Journalism	2	Italian or English
ITALY	Università degli Studi di Torino	15.0 Communication Science	2	Italian

Note: Agreements under the Erasmus Program are concluded for specific academic disciplines (academic programs). However, usually it is possible to take classes outside the main discipline of study, depending on student's interests, which should be agreed with Erasmus coordinator at a given university when *Learning Agreement* is decided. Information may be incomplete or outdated. Before selecting a particular university, students are requested to read carefully the teaching offer available to them as presented on the website of the school they are interested in and/or contact colleagues who studied there in the past.

## Chapter 10

### ERASMUS MOBILITY – A CASE STUDY OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN SPAIN, FRANCE, AND SWEDEN

#### 10.1. INTRODUCTION

15 June 1987 is the formal date when the European Union decided to launch the Erasmus programme. This day has had an impact on the lives of millions of young Europeans. The exchange of thoughts, opinions between citizens of different countries, studying in international groups, taking common initiatives has become a chance also for Poland since the 1998/1999 school year. Nowadays, 28 EU countries participate in the programme plus 4 countries of the European Economic Area (Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Lichtenstein) and a candidate (Turkey).

Within the Erasmus programme, there are a few measures targeted to students, academics and administration workers. One of the most popular is the exchange of students for one term or the whole year of studying, which is chosen by 95% of leaving students, while only 5% use the remaining 2 types of the programme – apprenticeships and internships.

Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education during her speech on the 25th anniversary of the Erasmus programme emphasised its role in building the education without barriers: “It would be hard to overestimate the role of this biggest in Europe programme of international academic exchange in the process of European integration, widening scientific cooperation and supporting the development of universities as well as the opportunities created for employees and students” (FRSE: 2012).

Until 2012, over 2.5 million of European students participated in the basic Erasmus programme. Nowadays, around 4,000 universities participate in the programme, including 315 universities from Poland (our country started with the number of 40 universities and 1,400 students a year). Up to year 2013, during 15 years, 123,356 people left Poland. Only in 2011/12, out of 253,000 students who participated in the programme, 15,315 were from Poland, while 8792 foreigners came to Poland.



Nowadays, Spain sends the highest number of students and it hosts the largest number of foreigners too. Germany takes the second place, later on there are France, Italy and Great Britain. Poland takes the 5th place in sending its students. Concerning the sex, 70% of participants are female, 30% are male. Concerning the level of studies, it is divided almost by half – 42% are the students of the first level, 56% of the second level, with a very low participation of only 1.9% of third-level students.

In the Erasmus programme referring to the renaissance model of education, the priority is to educate in more than one university. The programme has evolved during those years, it was called Socrates I in 1995–1999, Socrates II in 2000–2007, and since 2007, it is a part of The Lifelong Learning Programme.

The authors of the following text are the three beneficiaries of the Erasmus programme in the years 2009–2012, graduates from the University of Lodz, recollecting and judging in retrospect their own stays for studies abroad, currently doctoral students at the Faculty of International and Political Studies and the Faculty of Management at the University of Lodz. The introduction and the first subchapter was prepared by Jędrzej Kotarski (M.A.), a graduate in history, currently a doctoral student of political science, having participated in the Erasmus programme three times: in the framework of studies, traineeship and teaching, although in the following text, the author sticks to memories, comments and judgement of his first stay in Spain. The author of the second text is Aleksandra Olejnik (M.A.), a graduate of foreign relations at the University of Lodz, currently a doctoral student at the Faculty of Management, discussing her experiences from the period of studies in France. The author of the third part and conclusions is Michał Sędkowski (M.A.), who studied his Erasmus in Sweden.

## 10.2. ERASMUS MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN SPAIN

When in October 2012 some rumours about finishing and probably closing the Erasmus programme (PAP 2012, Alvarez 2012, FRSE 2013) appeared, as one of its 2.5 million (FRSE 2012) beneficiaries, I felt personal grief. In a blink of an eye, I saw every memory connected with my three stays in Spain connected with participating in three different types of Erasmus<sup>1</sup>. Those stays influenced my following choices but also largely shaped my personality. I would like to share with the readers some comments on the topic of the first Erasmus exchange I participated in.

My Erasmus adventure, just like in the case of most students, started from making the committee, which was to assess my motivations, believe that I did not consider Erasmus as “paid holidays” (Peiró 2013, Gąsior 2013), as was stereotypically thought by the committee members. This dissonance at the beginning

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<sup>1</sup> Erasmus Students Mobility, Erasmus Traineeship, Erasmus Staff Mobility (Teaching assignments).

of the qualifying process was, frankly speaking, a big surprise for me. Then, there was a nice but stressful time of waiting and finding my name among the lucky ones selected for the journey. The euphoria was caused by the vision of a long stay in sunny Andalusia in the south of Spain. This condition gradually began to weaken and gave way to anxiety of what, actually, would my studies and daily life there look like – and if I would find myself there. Even though I knew Spanish and I had been to Spain several times, working in bars and cafes, going out of home and Poland for more than six months seemed to me a very vague prospect. Months separating me from going were intensifying the anxiety. Finally, after an endless number of bureaucratic formalities in Poland, I landed in an almost arctic temperature in the centre of Granada<sup>2</sup> at night. Me and my enormous suitcase holding the indispensable, as I was thinking then, belongings, gave me a lesson right during that first night. After many hours of rolling my suitcase on a beautiful pavement during the day, but not necessarily so at night, unsuccessfully searching for the street without any map, I found the house which I was to live in. The place turned out to be already occupied and I was informed about it by a young beautiful girl, with her beauty so characteristic for the region and hypnotizing. Smiling charmingly, she informed me that, unfortunately, the promised offer of renting a room was outdated, and slammed the door in my face. After long wanderings, I and my suitcase found Pedro – a friend of a friend who, despite a deep night, promised to lend me the floor in a common corridor for the night. I had to postpone the dream rest till the dawn, because in the flat there was one of the famous Granadian parties taking place, connected with infinity of alcohol, music and discussions about everything, from ideological perspectives from the far left to right, in the culturally-geographical space from Australia to South America.

Those first 24 hours were the essence of my later experiences – they aroused in me the resourcefulness and skills in the field of a broadly defined sense of self-organizing. A totally different cultural neighbourhood, environment and understanding towards different ethno-national traditions made their presence felt during that first unforgettable night. The Arabic accent was mixing with Spanish and Portuguese presented by Americans, the Dutch, the Swedish and the German. That night began right then to break down national stereotypes, the Swedish turned out to be extremely warm and helpful and the German incredibly messy and indescribably chaotic. A banner seen through the window, which had the words “In Spain, coming home at 3 am is not a party – it’s going out for the supper”<sup>3</sup> turned out to be prophetic.

<sup>2</sup> Granada – a city in the South of Spain in the region of Andalusia, the capital of the province. Located by the river Genil, at the foot of Sierra Nevada Mountains, 80 km to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, is one of the most important tourist resorts in Spain. Famous for its monuments and considered the centre of Flamenco. During the Arabic domination on the Iberian Peninsula, it was the biggest and the richest city of the region.

<sup>3</sup> *En España, volver antes de las 3 no es salir, Es ir a cenar* – Spanish advertising of MacDonald’s chain.

The first week was marked by an unimaginable chaos associated with completing the documents of the host university. It was the first time I got to know the Spanish bureaucracy in practice. In the view of the prolonged and endless searching for the flat, I spent more than a week at the before mentioned Pedro's place, sleeping every day on a mattress in the corridor, but only after the end of the meetings, parties and famous going for *tapas* – that is from the morning hours.

Finding a flat is the next step which I will never forget till the end of my life. With the vast amount of offers, I met tens of speculators and swindlers in such a short time. The undisputed number one was a nice old lady with her clothes and hair in the style of the wife of General Franco<sup>4</sup>, who wanted to rent to me a microscopic room in the style of the "prison cell from the times of Louis XVI" 2 metres by 2 metres, without a window, with shabby walls and the equipment of only a mattress and something that looked like a stool, at a price inflated four times. But I could not complain about the lack of other attractions while sleeping at Pedro's place, almost every night until 4 in the morning I was being convinced by some to join the unit of the leaders of Trotskyism as an ideology most enlightened and prospective, by others to Buddhism and still others to pacifism. My Central European traditions, after a few days like those, began to seem like something so archaic that almost unreal, and the level of the argumentation of my interlocutors was really interesting.

Running super-prosaically around the city during the day and looking at new apartments (on average 10–15 per day), I found almost all of the options. There was an opportunity to live with 2 gay couples, a lesbian couple and a gay couple, 6 girls who started with a question whether I preferred hashish or cocaine because they preferred only that or the old Irish professor and his young beautiful Venezuelan lover, who made no secret perceiving me as a possible candidate to the love triangle. A district became the next stage of the quest. Due to the method of trial-and-error, I realized pretty quickly in which district there was good kebab, which one was famous for drugs and which for the terrible noise at night because of numerous clubs and the most common attacks. I got a handful of useful information: where you could have the best *tapas*<sup>5</sup>, in which clubs the best parties were, where you could make the cheapest photocopy or to which supermarket go shopping. My long-lasting quest resulted in a remarkable success when I found

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<sup>4</sup> Francisco Franco Bahamonde – (1892–1975) – a Spanish military dictator, fascist leader of the anti-republican revolution in 1936, ruling without any break in the years 1939–1975. A character bringing many disputes and controversies among historians and dividing older generations of the Spanish between his supporters and fierce opponents. Responsible for mass political murders during his regime.

<sup>5</sup> Tapas – snacks served with drinks in bars and restaurants in Spain. Coming from Andalusia, present in whole Spain. Can be served hot or cold and can have various forms – from simple snacks to more complicated dishes. The genealogy of tapas is connected with the fact that Andalusians while drinking wine, covered the glass with the slice of dry sausage, to protect the wine from flies. Later on, a thin slice of bread with various additions was added.

a flat just like in the movie – in a beautifully renovated tenement located right beside the cathedral in the city centre with a view of its columns and porticos opposite the archbishopric. Still, I had to win the casting for the tenant. The casting was based on the conversation and convincing the student from Finland – a Lutheran, a Russian from the Caucasus – an Orthodox Muslim, an American atheist hating the U.S. and everything that’s American (well, at the beginning I was wondering if she had any relationships with Al-Qaeda) and a Japanese shintoist, and at the end, the owners – conservative Catholics and, in addition, tax office employees. The apartment was so attractive that there were over a dozen candidates – how I managed to go through it all is to this day unknown to me – I finally won and moved into this really fabulous house, where I spent great 6 months, where I returned after a year and which I have been in touch with till these days.

My school in Granada, from Lodz *Alma Mater* – differed first in the approach to the students – very kind and helpful, breaking the distance and, of course, characteristic for this country, calling the name. The relationship between students and lecturers was surprising – on the one hand easy, almost friendly; on the other hand, demanding, holding the distance and the pattern of master – student relation because based not on prohibitions, but on mutual respect and curiosity. It turned out to be a bit tiresome when it came to a characteristic for this region of Andalusia unreliability and unpunctuality – being late 30–45 minutes was considered natural (Castillas 2013). The division of the classes was also different: in one week there were even up to 4 classes, that is up to 8 hours of one and the same subject. At the beginning, such a repetition and frequency recalled the memories from a high school and was objectionable. After a short period of time, it turned to be a good solution, because the theoretical and practical classes were conducted in parallel, forcing us to be active and really learn. You could use this intensive formula a lot and gain much from studying there or “hang around” in a proverbial manner, having fun for the whole semester, as part of the visitors did.

Granada itself enchanted me from the very first walk – beautiful and captivating with its amazing climate. Especially the famous *Alhambra*<sup>6</sup> which, throughout the year, takes more visitors than all Spanish airports together. Built in the eleventh century by the rulers of the *Umayyad dynasty*<sup>7</sup>, rebuilt many times,

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<sup>6</sup> Alhambra – classified as the jewel of the world’s architecture is the fortified palace complex built in 1232–1273 by emirs of the Nasrid dynasty residing on the Iberian Peninsula during the Mauretan Reconquista. The Alhambra is on the UNESCO World Heritage list and consists of the palace, the fortress and summer residence of the Caliph together with the famous Generalife gardens. During the Reconquista in the 15th century it was the residence of the emirs of Granada. The conquest in 1492 closes the medieval times. As a token of appreciation and admiration for its beauty, the Catholic kings left Alhambra undamaged, and it was only partially reconstructed during the rule of Charles V.

<sup>7</sup> Umayyad dynasty – an Arabic nation ruling the world of Islam between 665 and 750. After losing a battle by the Zab river in 750, prince Abd Ar-Rahman, the only survivor after the slaughter done by Hashemites, fled to Spain (Al-Andalus at that time) where he started a new line of the dynasty. His successors called themselves caliphs, creating in Cordoba a competitive centre of authority to Bagdad.

became a symbol of resistance and victory of Christians, described even by Adam Mickiewicz (2007). In addition, the *Albaicín*<sup>8</sup> – an old Arabic district located on the hillside above the town or old, coming from the time of the *Reconquista*<sup>9</sup> small narrow streets, old churches at almost every corner and, in the end, a monumental cathedral with tombs of *Reyes Católicos*<sup>10</sup>. A more recent style is represented by the main street – *Gran Vía de Colón*, commemorating the discoverer of America who, according to one legend, was exactly at Granada to convince Isabella the Catholic to finance his trip to India (Hugh 2006). Granada is not a big city; in 2 hours you can easily walk from one end of the town to the other. The number of foreigners per square kilometre is definitely a knockdown. Apart from the crowds of tourists which Granada was full of, regardless what time of the year it was, the city was full of students from other countries: from the Japanese, the Chinese, even the Hindus, through the Slovenians, Russians, Bulgarians, people of all EU countries, to the Americans and Mexicans, Venezuelans, Argentinians, etc. In brief, you could choose whatever you wanted. It is interesting that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 50,000 students of the local university were Erasmus programme grant holders (Tallantyre 2013, Universidad de Granada 2013).

My stay within Erasmus in Granada gave me not only the opportunity for my applicable studies, but also brought an amazing experience in the socio-cultural and socio-political range, which would never be given to me by any studies in Poland.

According to the data of the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE), which deals with the mobility in the LLP programme in Poland (Lifelong Learning Programme)<sup>11</sup>, 15,318 Polish students have gone to Spain since 1998, making this country the third most popular choice by Polish students after Germany and France (Członkowska-Naumiuk 2013). What is interesting, throughout five years, the proportions have changed and grown rapidly

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<sup>8</sup> Albaicín – an old Arabic district in the eastern part of Granada, located on the hill facing Alhambra, is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Because of narrow streets running between whitened houses, full of geraniums and smelling of oranges in the summer as well as breathtaking view of Alhambra, it is a place especially liked by the tourists.

<sup>9</sup> Reconquista – (in Spanish: another conquest) – times of fighting between Christians and Moors aiming at a partial and later on total expulsion of those from the Iberian Peninsula, lasting from 8th to 15th century and finished with conquering Granada in 1492.

<sup>10</sup> Christian Kings – (in Spanish: *Los Reyes Católicos*) – a common title given to the royal couple Isabella I the Catholic and Ferdinand II the Catholic by the pope Alexander the 6th as a token of appreciation for bringing back the Catholic domination in Spain in the 15th century and expelling the Arabs in 1492.

<sup>11</sup> Lifelong Learning Programme – an educational programme which includes, among others, the Erasmus programme; started by the European Commission in 2007 as the continuation of the Socrates II Programme. LLP was implemented from 2007 to 2013. Its aim was to strengthen the cooperation between the European Union countries and support the exchange of students and teachers from the member countries.

also among other nationalities – the vision of “*albergue espagnole*”<sup>12</sup> which stands for Spanish Erasmus, turned out to be one of the most popular in Europe. According to a study by the European Commission, Spain has welcomed more than 37,000 Erasmus students (Organismo Autónomo Programas Educativos Europeos 2013), which strongly distanced it from the previous beneficiaries – French and English competitors. In 2012, as many as 2,721 Polish students went to Spain (Członkowska-Naumiuk 2013). This status has not changed the interest in the country where the official economic crisis was one of the most serious. The consequences of the crisis are noticeable in our country when it comes to an increasing number of students and Spanish university graduates coming to us. Thus, while Polish students are still “flowing” into Spain as an uninterrupted stream, the Spanish, due to the lack of work in their country, willingly choose our country after the completion of the exchange as the place of their first employment or further studies, which is the subject of another article by the author (Kotarski 2012).

Many Polish Erasmus students stereotypically choose Spain because of the vision of beautiful weather, sun, nature, beaches and palms as well as all night long parties. However, it should be remembered that participation in Erasmus, although having its fun side, also involves hard work, overcoming fears, cultural differences and – above all – immediate necessity to communicate in Spanish exclusively and to learn self-reliance. Although the theme of parties and warm climate in the majority of memories tends to be the reason of the choice of this place, more serious questions bring more serious reasons for the decision. First of all, the first place is taken by the willingness to learn Spanish (Organismo Autónomo de Programas Educativos Europeos 2013). The language spoken today by nearly 400 million people and which is currently, right after English, the most popular foreign language all over the world, which has been an abstract piece of information for Poles until recently. Knowledge of Spanish opens many doors not only on the Iberian Peninsula, but also in almost whole South America. It starts to be used by young Poles more and more often nowadays. The richness of old famous universities as well as their high level and constantly rising number of international projects also encourage to choose Spain. “Good reputation and nice atmosphere at Spanish universities, the hospitality of the inhabitants bring many students from abroad” – claims Peter Scott from the European Commission (Marin 2012). Iberian universities, especially known for their multinational character Universities in Granada and Seville as well as strongly developed cooperation between Andalusia and countries of Latin America, omnipresence of loads of Latin Americans confirm how popular the destination is also for the youth from the New World. The common language and friendships make young people believe in the possibility of economic rise in developing even tighter relationships with the New

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<sup>12</sup> *L'auberge espagnole* – a Polish title *Smak życia* (*The taste of Life*) (2002), directed by Cedric Klapisch. A popular film telling the story of a student participating in the Erasmus programme in Spain.

World (San Miguel 2013, Sancha Rojo 2013). While talking about economy, one has to mention one more reason for choosing Spain as a place for scholarship stay; Spain, and Andalusia especially, has relatively low and reasonable (in comparison to other west European cities) costs of living. This attractive element means that the EU scholarship may cover the costs of accommodation and part of maintenance during the stay which, for example in the case of Finland or France, is almost impossible (European Commission 2013).

Stays within the Erasmus Programme are connected with so many legends that they are seen as myths; one can look at them indulgently, but one can see in them real magic as well. Young people from all around the world, due to hospitality, openness of life and sympathy of the environment, truly change in their everyday relations becoming, for half of a year or a year, similar to their hosts in kind of carelessness, joy of everyday existence and omnipresent fun. It gives new, nicer character to the representatives of many nations (especially the North ones). Poles leave behind complaining, gossiping about the whole world, sense of their historic mission or political martyrology.

It has to be noticed, however, that apart from some general experiences brought by the stay within the Erasmus programme in Spain (or other countries), final effects are a very personal issue. How the life will go on and what will be the dominant character of the stay will depend, apart from the external factors, mainly on the personality of the character – that is the holder of scholarship. During my stay in Granada I met various kinds of students:

- a) ‘crazy party-goers’ – many of those were usually calm, systematic, “normal” students, who suddenly discovered in themselves an *alter ego*, placing them in the group of outgoing-party loving beasts;
- b) the second group consisted of those who were able to spend their time developing wide friendship relations, journeys and getting to know local culture, having fun and learning;
- c) the third group (the least numerous) consisted of those who were enjoying Erasmus in a very limited way, spending their time mainly on social networking websites or online instant messengers, counting the days till the end of the stay and coming back to their “regular life”.

To me personally, extremely meaningful is the fact that during my 5-year contacts with the “world of Erasmus” I have come across only 4 cases of dissatisfaction with the choice of Spain as the Erasmus destination.

One cannot forget the diverse attitude of Spanish lecturers. Some of them set lower criteria for the Erasmus students and so-called “preferential treatment”, considering this a promotion of the university and EU funds following it. Others treat all students equally, no matter where they come from and what their level of Spanish is. This happens at the University in Granada, which every year has so many students and is such an attractive place for studying that it does not have to try to win the sympathy of its students. “If anybody tells me that you don’t

have to learn while on Erasmus, I will kill them” – laughs a friend from the Netherlands, currently a scholarship holder at the UGR. “I came back from a party at 6 am, I slept for 2 hours, I was revising the material for the following 2 hours and at 10 I went to take the exam” – adds a student from Germany with a tired but smiley face.

A relaxed attitude towards obligations and deadlines is a cult problem for (not only) Erasmus students in Spain and may cause a lot of problems, exasperating the better organised individuals. The documents being carried for two months from one building to another located 500 metres further on may be one of the examples. In the majority of cases, it is better not to get upset but to adapt and remember about an old rule: “Do not expect from the Spanish what they have promised – go to them and squeeze it out by yourself.”

The last, extraordinarily important element which cannot be forgotten is the amazing diversity of the country; one has to remember that Granada does not stand for Santiago de Compostela, just like Madrid just not stand for Barcelona or Bilbao – each region and every city has its own characteristics, distinguishing them from others. This multiplicity of the faces of Spain often causes many misunderstandings among foreign students. A few times I have witnessed offended Galicians explaining that they did not have palms nor drink *tinto de verano* (a typical for South drink made of red wine and lemon Fanta or Sprite), that they did not listen to *flamenco* but they played bagpipes (and it is not copying the Scotsmen). Some other times, I saw how proud Catalans demanded from desperate students *lengua catalana*<sup>13</sup> (the most stereotypical but often happening story), mocking Andalusians cutting the endings (according to whom they were just jealous of their ability to enjoy the life), and whose *andalu*<sup>14</sup>, the regional dialect of Spanish, during the first meeting makes even those students who, coming for Erasmus, have already known Spanish, full of complexes.

During my first year of studies and two years before leaving for Erasmus I saw already mentioned *Albergue espagnole* – a famous film telling the story of a student from Belgium and his crazy life on a scholarship in Barcelona; I remember how amazing and magical this story seemed to me. When I found this film on TV a few months after having come back from Granada, with a very wide smile I could say, just like many Erasmus students – “My story was more interesting!”

To sum up, I am proud that I can belong to the European group of Erasmus students. The decision about the journey is to me one of the most important moments in my life. During my stay I was confirmed in the belief that we, Poles, have a lot

<sup>13</sup> *Lengua catalana* – a Catalan language, regional type of Spanish language, present in the North-East part of the country, with the influences of the French language.

<sup>14</sup> *Andaluz* (*andalu'*) – regional type of Spanish present in the South part of Spain and Ceuta and Mellila, recognized as a local dialect in 1611. One of its characteristics is the tendency to omit some sounds, especially ‘s’, which results in a different pronunciation from the recognised one and often used diminutives.



to offer to others, that our culture and traditions are important together with many characteristics that irritate us on a daily basis and we mock them. I was also convinced that intercultural contacts bring important experiences, that we gain from our own experience a totally different attitude towards multiculturalism. Due to my stay, international contacts became an authentic part of my life functioning on different levels – from private to scientific. I met many interesting and precious people who I am still in touch with; both professors and friends. Those relationships have influenced now significantly wider perception of reality, my beliefs, thoughts about other people – they definitely developed and stimulate my openness to the world. Everyday international relations, a longer stay in a totally unfamiliar environment have accelerated the development of my self-reliance and creativity. I understood that not everything that had been planned and prepared must give positive effects – sometimes an impulse, opportunity, quick decision, change of plans bring important new experience and unexpected effects. Erasmus taught me that the dreams can come true.

In relation to the title of one of the articles in a popular Spanish daily paper ‘*El País*’ entitled “Europe will end without Erasmus” (Peris 2012) one can risk a brave theory that Erasmus will end without Spain – and if not, it would not be the same.

### 10.3. ERASMUS MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN FRANCE

I participated in the Erasmus program during my third year of studies at the Faculty of International Relations at the University of Lodz. I always wanted to specialize in the international relations and since the first year at the University I was sure that I would take part in the Erasmus program. I considered it as a perfect opportunity to meet new people and explore new fields of studies. I was the first student from my year who decided to apply for the Erasmus scholarship. My friends thought that the third year of studying is too soon to go abroad due to the fact that we had a lot of courses and they assumed that it would be too difficult to pass all the exams in Poland after coming back. I applied to participate in the Erasmus program in France. The choice of the destination was obvious to me, due to the fact that I spent almost all holidays in this country. This was the reason why I decided to go to the French profile class in the high school. The opportunity to study in France was a perfect chance for me to explore the culture in which I was interested since I was a kid and to develop my language skills.

When I received the acceptance to participate in the program I was really pleased but at the same time I started to be scared, especially about the administrative side of organizing the trip. However, as soon after I had consulted with the Erasmus coordinator at my faculty, I had all the answers and pieces of advice I needed.

I did not have any expectations, I had been travelling a lot all my life so I thought nothing would surprise me. However, as the reality showed, Erasmus is an entirely different type of international experience. I was completely unprepared for spending hours in the offices, running for fifteen different courses, participating in ten welcome meetings a week. I chose to study at the university which had the most interesting offer of international studies courses. I was the only student going to Montpellier from the University of Lodz and due to this fact I did not have, in contrast to my friends, an opportunity to organize the trip to France and find an apartment with Polish students. I assumed that because of this situation I would probably spend first week before starting classes on going around the city, sightseeing, reading books on the beach and relaxing. Of course, one hour after I came to my students' dormitory I was participating in birthday party of my new neighbor during which I met half of my students' dorm, which was inhabited mostly by French students.

Not knowing Polish students in Montpellier was a perfect opportunity to improve my language skills and for the personal development. This situation forced me to interact with international students, to be honest, I met only five Polish students during my stay. What is more, together with my Polish fellow students, we actually did not have any will to interact, we felt safe in our own company. But after some time in France, I guess we realized that it is better for us to explore new horizons instead of choosing the "safe" option, therefore we left our comfort zones and we made plenty of new friends there.

Before participating in Erasmus I was afraid that I would perceive, and be perceived, through numerous stereotypes. I actually thought that all the French students would be sophisticated and not willing to interact with Erasmus guests, German students would be hopelessly boring and not doing anything interesting, Spanish and Italian students would drink sangria all days and at nights watch football. Erasmus proved me that stereotypes had nothing to do with the reality. What is more, I absolutely loved spending time with French students, on the evenings organized by Germans, with food cooked by Italians, while we were all drinking sangria.

To be honest, I was surprised that the university lecturers were not treating me as *the* international student. The only advantage which I had due to the fact that French language was not my mother tongue, was the fact that I could use a dictionary during the final exams. Moreover, during the first month I was amazed and frustrated by the fact that I had to do homework for every course. Firstly, I felt like I was back in high school, but after some time I realized that this method had some advantages. To get ready for all the courses took me two hours per week and after this amount of time I was prepared to participate in the classes. This method gave me an opportunity not only to systematize my knowledge, but which was most important, I actually had the opportunity to think about the issues and my personal opinion about the cases which we were discussing. This was so much different from the system which I was used to.

I was on the scholarship at the third year of studies and I did not (yet) had a specialization. It was the reason why I had problems with choosing the list of courses in France. So I decided to sign up for as many courses as I could, participated at least in two classes of each one of them and then made a decision on which ones I would like to continue. This was the reason why my transcript of records contained versatile and various courses, from History of Art through Public Relations to History of American Diplomacy. The diversity of courses in which I participated in France was perfect for me, because after coming to Lodz I actually knew in which direction I wanted to go. What is more, studying at Paul Valery University gave me not only the theoretical, but more importantly, the practical knowledge about the learned courses as well.

The course which I remember until today was the History of American Diplomacy. The professor was an American writer, who had been working in Iraq and Afghanistan. Every week I was actually waiting for Friday, not only because it was the beginning of the weekend (actually for an Erasmus student every day is like a Friday), but because I was waiting for participating in the discussion in class. Until today I do not know if it was the charismatic professor or the fact that for the first time in my life I had an opportunity to discuss for example the World War II with German and French students; to actually start thinking in a different way about the history. This was when I fully realized how different the perception of “facts” could be. I think this was one of the most important aspects of my participation in the programme – the fact that I actually understood why we need to interact with other societies and nations and why we need to talk and interact at the high level meetings, but as friends drinking wine and discussing the economic problems in the euro zone. I understood how important is the cooperation at the local, regional and national level. I wanted to be a part of it, I decided that I would like to work in an institution or organization that would be involved in developing the European cooperation.

I came back from France in December and, to be honest, I was looking forward to being back in Poland because I really missed my family and friends. I was even looking forward to coming back to the university to finally pass all the exams and have this period of my life closed. Based on my observations, students suffer from, what I call – *posterasmus syndrome*. It is characteristic for students who come back from Erasmus to be depressed, dissatisfied with situation in the country, weather, parties, lack of international friends. This *posterasmus syndrome* can be observed for a period of, more or less, three months. After this time students in most of the cases present two attitudes – they decide to adapt to the grey reality or they try to find a new way, new option to explore the world and gain some life experience.

I thought that due to the Erasmus experience, I would be perceived by future employers not only as a student, but also a person who managed to study in a different country and a person who has developed language and interpersonal skills.

After coming back I was sure that I would like to have one more opportunity to interact in the international society. As soon as I came back, I started to look for an internship in France. Firstly, I applied for the Erasmus practice program, in the meantime I applied for an internship in the Regional Office of the City of Lodz in Brussels. Three months after Erasmus, I came back to France – but this time to Paris, for an interview in a PR agency. One day after I came back to Lodz, I had an interview in the City Hall. The interviewers were especially interested in finding out what I learnt during the Erasmus program, and how it helped me to be able to cooperate with different cultures – due to the fact that those skills were absolutely necessary for those positions. Finally, I decided to participate in the internship program in Brussels which I consider as my second step to the mobility. This internship took me over six months. During this time I focused on European policy and was writing my Master thesis about this topic. While I was working in the Regional Office, I had an opportunity to participate in conferences and high level meetings, which took place in the European Parliament, European Commission, and Committee of the Regions, during which I had a chance to develop my knowledge about European institutions and develop my language skills. Moreover, during these six months I decided that I wanted to work in the regional office in Brussels.

After I came back from Brussels I focused on my Master thesis but due to the fact that Cohesion Policy, about which I was writing my Master thesis was a very dynamic subject, I decided that I had to go back to Brussels, one more time, this time for a research. I applied for an internship at a Member of European Parliament Office in Brussels and after the interview I got the position and one more time went for two months to Brussels to finish my Master thesis. I had an opportunity to observe in European Parliament how the Cohesion Policy was changing (it was the time when European politicians were discussing the Europe 2020 strategy and the new financial perspective for years 2014-2020) and it was then that I realized that I would like to continue studying this issue in the context of urban policy at the Ph.D. level. I went to Brussels a few times more, mostly for research and for interviews with European officials. Last year, I finally got the job in City Hall in the Regional Office in Brussels.

And yes, my job is about European Union policy, urban aspects of Cohesion Policy but actually my work is all about adapting to the new situation, finding solutions, interacting with different people from various European countries. As I look back, I have to admit that Erasmus experience was extremely important to develop my personal skills in this area. The participation in the programme taught me how to interact with people with different cultural backgrounds.

I wanted to participate in the program to develop my languages skills, but it was a unique opportunity to develop my personal and professional skills as well. From my perspective, it was my first step to the mobility, which gave me a good start to develop my international career and it was an inspiration to start studies in the field in which I am specializing at the Ph.D. level.

## 10.4. ERASMUS MOBILITY EXPERIENCES IN SWEDEN

Sweden is not the most popular destination for Erasmus studies for students of our Faculty, as I was the only applicant. People tend to choose more familiar locations or ones with better climate. More so than anything, recommendations from other students, are usually what persuades them to choose one particular location. In my case, my friends who were there during their Erasmus, recommended Växjö in Sweden as a very calm and peaceful place with very good teaching standards, infrastructure and open-minded people. As I had never lived abroad for more than 2 weeks, it was also important that the university provided accommodation and help in all matters regarding studies and life as such.

The most important factor was that the visit to Sweden was important for my Ph.D. thesis. As my work was concentrating around the intellectual property protection, Sweden was a very good place to start my research, as this was, at that time, the country with the lowest piracy rate in the European Union. As the Erasmus programme allows to tailor the education experience to one's needs, it was a good place to conduct research and get to know the culture, which was also important for my work. It was a personalized experience, which is very important, when you are trying to conceptualize your thesis and the studies were a perfect match.

I was supposed to come to Växjö, around 26–31st August for the orientation week. It was not mandatory, but recommended as it allowed to familiarize myself with the university, campus and city before the actual classes began. The first contact from Sweden appeared in early July, a simple message that all my documents were now accepted and they would be sending official invitations in about a month. Very soon afterwards, the housing company sent a confirmation that, exactly as I asked, I was given a single room on the ground floor. This was important to me, as a disabled person, living on higher floors is a bit troublesome. They also requested that I pay the rent upfront, until mid-July. Finally, also in July I was contacted by my tutor – a native student who offered help before and during my stay and a person from the International Office asking if I needed any additional aid during my studies. A month before departure, I knew everything I needed to know and was in constant contact with my tutor and the International Office. This is very important as it helps to avoid most of the issues and stress regarding the trip. The initial experience was very positive and I was really looking forward to the trip. It is worth noting that all the requirements that stood before candidates for the Erasmus were clearly stated and I didn't have any problems, which is definitely a big positive.

I was coming to Sweden with a very clear view of what I wanted to accomplish. This is not to say that I didn't have any doubts about the trip and stay there, but I spent a good amount of time reading articles about Sweden, its culture and customs. That wasn't necessary, as the university provided detailed information about the country, city and campus, but doing my own research made it easier

to plan the trip and stay. My goal was to familiarize myself with the Swedish culture, people and get to know them, not from a tourist perspective, but someone who is living there and working. Since I already had a buddy assigned to help me, it was a good starting point to begin the process. The classes I took were mostly connected with marketing, but also Swedish culture as I took 'Beginner's Swedish for Erasmus students'. The course was tutored by a native speaker, who was not only teaching the language, but also customs and culture. Since the course was aimed at Erasmus students only, people from all around the world, we had many discussions, about how cultures differed from each other and how it was reflected in one's views and opinions. It was a great value added to the course, which I had not expected.

Apart from courses that I took, I came in contact with both government and local-government agencies, such as the Våxjö Kommun (Våxjö district), to gather data and carry out in-depth interviews with their representatives. I was fully aware that my research topic was controversial and not all people wished to talk about it openly, at least these were my experiences in Poland. In Sweden, however, the situation was different. One chapter of my thesis was devoted to a detailed comparison between Poland and Sweden regarding computer piracy. The elements of interest were social, economic and judicial characteristics and how they affect the perception of computer piracy. I came to Sweden to find out what has been done to keep the piracy rate at such a low level, so the country was to be a sort of benchmark. As expected, this approach was received very positively by all Swedish people I came in contact with. Furthermore, being an Erasmus student, who came here only for one semester, yet wished to learn the language and culture, was viewed as something extraordinary, which 'opened many doors' for me. I do believe that this aspect of the Erasmus programme is not always given enough credit. As an Erasmus student, I was allowed to participate in any courses I wanted, even those full-year courses, although I didn't get any points for it, as I participated only in the first half. The culture and language courses were proposed by the university as something optional, as an add-on to the main courses. I personally believe that this is a mistake and can become one of the Erasmus programme's strengths if handled appropriately. The main focus of the Erasmus programme is to allow students to experience other cultures and studying environments at low cost and risk. The problem I personally observed was that only a handful of students were actually interested in participating in social activities outside the student group. A lot of meetings and activities were organized by the local community to show the international students how it was to live here in Sweden and what the country had to offer in terms of tourist attractions. However, the students were not particularly interested and focused on activities provided by the student organizations.

As stated at the beginning of this section, Sweden is not the most popular destination among Polish students. For the autumn semester of 2012, there were

10 Polish students on the campus, from different parts of Poland, of different age and study specializations. However we found each other quite easily during the first day and through social media we were able to communicate instantly. It was a very positive aspect, especially at the beginning, because it made everyone feel more natural and secure, knowing you had people to talk to in your own language. The problem, however, was that most of them were perfectly satisfied with spending their time among themselves. This is not to say that they were avoiding others, but it was quite peculiar. For me, it was important to spend as much time as possible with people from other cultures and get to know them better. It was not only because I wanted to gather materials for my thesis. Erasmus gives an opportunity to actually be a part of a community, which is a different experience from just being a tourist. Living in a particular place for six months enables you to get an idea what it is like to live there, work and have a normal daily routine. I personally was actively searching for that experience, while others were quite content spending time among other students of the same nationality. Sometimes it was very enjoyable, but I always realized that I could be doing the very same thing in Poland, without the need to travel anywhere. I found that to be a bit of a waste of time. The problem was that not everyone shared my point of view and it led to some misunderstandings in the process. Naturally it was normal that students of the same nationality created groups, which was especially true for Asian nations or Germans, who were the biggest share of about 70% of all Erasmus students. That being said, there were a lot of students who wanted to learn everything about other nations, culture and customs, understanding that this may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The university campus is basically a closed enclave in the suburbs of Växjö. All university buildings and dormitories are very close to each other, within a walking distance. It was a new experience for me, as in Poland the university buildings are usually scattered around the city, quite far from each other. On the campus, a number of stores are located, including a general store, computer store, bike store and service and a couple of others. This allows to handle all your basic needs on the campus and stay there for the entirety of one's stay. Going to the city centre was a choice, not a necessity. Although Växjö is a rather small town, it offered a number of tourist attractions, restaurants with cuisine from different parts of the world. We spent many hours wandering around the city, visiting everything we could, including even simple shops and supermarkets, just to see how it differed from the ones we had in our countries. On the other hand, the academic year in Sweden starts at the beginning of September, so a month earlier than in Poland. As I came on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, I had a week before the classes started. The main thing that surprised me was that, after the first week, we already had a group project scheduled, papers to write and books to read, all due in a month. The Swedish system is not based on semesters directly, but on a number of weeks

that a given course lasts, so one can last till the end of the semester, while another may end after a month. This is very different than what I was used to and it took me a while to understand and cope with the new reality. The intensiveness of studies forced most students to seek help of others and divide the work among one another. This was a very positive experience, as many people became very good friends, just because they attended the same course.

My Erasmus stay in Sweden was very fruitful, both from the cultural and academic perspectives. I strongly believe that Erasmus is a very positive program, that allows students to acquire skills, needed to be competitive on the market. Through a series of meetings with government officials, academic staff and other people, I managed to gather materials for the second chapter of my thesis. By visiting libraries, I managed to extend my bibliography with some noteworthy titles. However, I think this is not the most important outcome of my visit to Sweden. By talking to other people, mostly from other nations, I managed to improve my language and social skills and I feel much more confident now. Living in a multicultural environment allowed me to understand others better and appreciate them more. As I was forced to study at a different pace and style than I was used to in Poland, I learned how to cope with stress and organize my work better. I improved or learned these skills without any special attention or steps taken. This happened, because I needed to complete a given task and other benefits simply followed. I think these aspects need to gain more attention in the future, as developing such 'soft skills' is becoming more and more important, yet they are very hard to measure and evaluate effectively. More emphasis should be placed on a particular student's motivation, why does he or she want to visit a particular country? What benefits will this bring? These questions need to be addressed in the near future, as more and more students study thanks to the Erasmus program. The academic aspect is of equal importance of course and the main focus must remain on studying, but there are other aspects which I feel are not stressed enough. Interpersonal development is very important and the Erasmus program can be a great tool that can boost the process. However, incentives or requirements should be put in place to help the students understand how to approach the issue and gain as much as possible from their international mobility. I went to Sweden with a clear goal: to conceptualize my thesis and improve my communication and social skills. I've succeed fully and the trip allowed to gather many contacts with students and professors, which resulted in collaboration on a few international research projects and scientific papers. I do believe that in the long run, these skills and contacts will benefit my university carrier to a great extent. Plus being a disabled person and staying abroad for five months is a good 'proof' that I can handle myself without any problems. Such 'proofs' are unfortunately a necessity on the Polish job market, at least from my own experiences.



## 10.5. CONCLUSION

The Erasmus programme is a very widespread and valuable tool for young people to experience how it is to live in a different country and cope with daily activities. The high number of participants and new universities applying for the programme are a sign that the demand is still very high and students understand the importance of mobility and flexibility. Although it is structured and offers a wide range of procedures, Erasmus allows students to experience the trip on their own terms, making it more accessible to all interested. In this chapter, three different persons shared their experiences with Erasmus. They all chose different destinations, however the overall experience was similar and satisfactory.

It is clear that participants view Erasmus differently and therefore emphasise those aspects that are important for their goals. There are people who treat Erasmus as a social platform, allowing them to meet and establish relations with people from other countries and cultures, others seek business and study opportunities, to maximize their effectiveness and competitiveness on the job market later. Naturally there is also a group that wish to party and treat the Erasmus trip as a holiday. Still the programme forces students to participate in a number of classes that carry a certain degree of difficulty and demands a particular level of involvement from students, who are required to divide their time both to study and social activities. Such skills are very important in daily life, especially when one has to care both for professional and family life. Therefore anyone participating in the Erasmus programme returns with a number of benefits, which are equally important and may prove beneficial in one's professional life. Others, more learning-oriented benefit from educational offers of universities around Europe that provide a different approach and point of view to given subjects. Access to libraries and educational materials is an added benefit that a foreign university may provide, which may help students to write a more innovative thesis that may be useful for business and job prospects.

It is safe to say that the Erasmus programme has proven its worth and one can only hope that it will be continued in the next financial period 2014–2020. The number of students interested in participating is constantly high, reviews provided after finishing the study are positive. Current focus should be put on employability of the participants and how the programme can be improved to boost it even further.

## CONCLUSION

### **The role of the Erasmus programme in enhancing students and graduates' mobility**

Unquestionably, Erasmus stimulates students' mobility and, at a later stage, a mobile student becomes a mobile university graduate. Mobility – as a vital element of a modern university curriculum – becomes a solid foundation for how a graduate handles her/his professional career in the future. Challenges of contemporary, international and a very competitive labour market require an employee to be open and flexible and the Erasmus programme excellently supports the development and reinforcement of these qualities.

### **Better perspectives for an attractive job**

Participants of the Erasmus Programme are in general much better in moving around the international and competitive labour market. Compared to their peers, they are much more mobile and flexible. Their qualities and interpersonal communication skills, enhanced by the Erasmus programme, help them better understand other cultures and work in international teams. Progressing globalisation and internationalisation of economies increase the demand for specialist employees familiar with the realities of other countries and cultures. Such employees are especially appreciated by large multinational companies operating on the global market as well as by internationally oriented businesses and organisations. Erasmus graduates are excellent candidates for work in contemporary media and international organisations and associations.

### **Erasmus as a means to enhance graduates' chances**

Compared to their peers, who often face serious problems in finding a job, participants of the Erasmus programme are much more active, entrepreneurial and creative in coping with the challenges of the international and very competitive labour market. Erasmus teaches them to be independent, determined in action and responsible for their own decisions. Being confronted with new, international environment during university studies makes them more independent and gives them more confidence in their ability to achieve goals.

It seems that Erasmus can very well contribute to reducing threats connected with finding a job by young Europeans in countries like Spain, Portugal, Greece or Italy. The Programme enhances their mobility, changes the perception of challenges and surely improves their chances for being employed on markets in countries in which they stayed under Erasmus exchange. That is particularly true of countries like Germany or Scandinavian countries and the countries of Central Europe, especially Poland. Poland's attractiveness as a target or temporary labour market for foreigners results from strong internationalisation of Polish economy and the inflow of foreign investment.

Increasing demand for educated foreigners can be observed in particular in new BPO centres based in Poland, which serve global companies and seek employees who could service clients in various continental markets as that requires fluency in foreign languages and the knowledge of the specificity of their home markets.

### **New model of a university graduate**

The new model of a university graduate consists in a wide use of mobility as the means of building one's position and individual competitive advantage on the labour market. Open-minded people who have experience of living abroad can better understand other cultures. It seems that such an advantage is achieved mostly by students originating from smaller countries, especially of Central Europe, in particular Poland.

Openness to other cultures and collaboration allows those who have benefited from Erasmus to become especially valued employees in global and international companies. They are not only promising collaborators and members of staff in such companies but, first and foremost, potential leaders and managers of international teams and business projects. Observations conducted in Poland confirm that they are very good managers and heads of international projects.

In conditions of progressing globalisation, they are excellent heads of international projects implemented on various markets. Such qualities and skills will in the future be particularly precious on international markets of services where one must manage both international teams of staff and groups of international clients on everyday basis.

The new „Erasmus-like” model of a graduate especially well meets the requirements of the international and very competitive labour market. Such a graduate is very mobile and open to new challenges.

### **Mobility on international labour market**

The Erasmus programme exactly matches the trends connected with globalisation and the necessity to prepare graduates to move around in the international environment. It is particularly important for seeking the opportunities to improve the competitiveness of EU economies. Another reason is the fact that contemporary economies are knowledge-based and compete mainly in services based on intellectual capital and intercultural communication.

### **Specificity of the Erasmus programme in countries of Central Europe**

Compared to the „old EU member states”, countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as new EU member states, show much more openness and mobility. That is mostly due to the need to make up for some developmental shortcomings, higher dynamics and determination of individuals to build their personal professional career models. The model is largely shaped by the experiences of the Erasmus programme.

Polish students are among top beneficiaries of Erasmus and they are very skilful at using acquired skills in their future professional career. Besides, the important factor decisive for their future employment is the combination of studies with professional work. When they are on Erasmus study mobility, many of them also work to supplement low grants and to get acquainted with the requirements and the specificity of a foreign labour market.

### **Social perception of Erasmus**

Many experts and the participants to Erasmus say the programme is one of the most effective tools of European integration policy. It is also the programme which does not provoke any negative associations or controversies. That is why its budget should systematically increase. The programme prepares young people to multicultural cooperation within the European Union and, indirectly, to the cooperation between the EU and its external partners.

Skills and competencies acquired within Erasmus can easily be passed on to various configurations of external relations. Erasmus students meet their colleagues from other countries, which provides an excellent background for facing the challenges of globalisation and internationalisation of contemporary economies.

In the case of Poland, we should strongly emphasise that Polish universities are currently at the top of European universities when it comes to the number of students participating in the Erasmus mobility scheme. They also rank at the top of European universities with respect to university staff mobility under the Erasmus programme.

The data confirm deep harmony between the intensity of students' exchange and that of academic staff. Harmonisation of both these streams of exchange very strongly influences international orientation of Polish universities. Internationalisation and university-business collaboration have become fundamental elements in strategies of the leading Polish universities.

### **Erasmus as a means of improving the competitiveness of European economies**

The competitiveness of European economies should be built on innovation. Students' mobility and relations with various markets and cultures may undoubtedly provide inspiration for many innovative solutions, creativity and opening

to other cultures. The philosophy of Erasmus lays good foundations for interdisciplinary work of international project teams, something very useful for working in global companies as well as in internationally oriented SMEs.

### **Future challenges**

The Erasmus programme should, no doubt, be continued. However, we should think of how to improve it by making the partners more involved into the exchange scheme and in taking care of a foreign student. The care should include progressing individualisation of education. Personalisation of counselling to foreign students will help them better use the stay at the host university. It is also worth considering the possibility of combining studies with internships in companies and writing diploma theses.

Stay at a foreign university should be used even better for building professional career. Personalised counselling to foreign students, in the context of her/his future professional plans, may be extremely helpful in finding an attractive job after completing the studies, also in the country where he/she stayed during Erasmus exchange. It will require broader contacts with a foreign student by increasing the involvement of the host university staff. We should do away with kind of „anonymity” of a foreign student and integrate her/him more with academic staff of the foreign university. Paradoxically, such an approach requires more openness and better understanding of foreign students’ needs.

Besides purely formal cooperation based on signed agreements, we should extend the real partners’ cooperation resulting from bilateral projects based on these agreements. The projects may provide for various forms of teaching and scientific cooperation. It will also require broader exchange of teaching and administrative staff involved in international exchange.

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